



THE UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS
LIBRARY

823
C 356 b
v. 3

UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS





B E N B R A C E.

—

VOL. III.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

Chas. Aug^{ts} Manning

BEN BRACE,

THE LAST OF NELSON'S AGAMEMNONS.

Frederick
BY CAPTAIN CHAMIER, R.N.

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF A SAILOR," &c.

// D'ye mind me, a sailor should be ev'ry inch
// All as one as a piece of the ship,
// And with her brave the world without offering to flinch,
From the moment the anchor's a-trip.

DIEDIN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.

1836.

823
C3566
v. 3

English

B E N B R A C E,

THE LAST OF THE AGAMEMNONS.

CHAPTER I.

Fall'n ! fall'n ! is the hero, but Victory's cry
Saluted his soul as it took its sad flight,
And thousands like Nelson would sure wish to die,
Ador'd by his country, triumphant in fight !

Sea Song.

I WAS on deck before daylight : so was the admiral. Those who had had the middle watch hardly cared to turn in ; and when we could see the horizon, and make out the fleet and the frigates, we saw from the mast-head of the *Euryalus* that the enemy were in sight, bearing north ; and away we went in that direction, carrying a press of sail, and all the fleet cracking on not to drop astern. Nelson was on deck from daylight until dark, taking short turns on the quarter-deck, and moving

about his right arm, or its stump, like a village pump-handle. The breeze freshened from the south-west; and as we had the Frenchmen clear of their port, and found that we gained upon them, there was no doubt as to the battle.

The 20th of October was not passed in play-acting: the ship was got ready for action; and as we had plenty of time before us, the arms were inspected, the fire-screen examined, and more powder filled. Towards the evening, the *Euryalus* again made the signal, "that the enemy seemed bound to the westward;" and I began to think that if they sailed well, we might yet see Jamaica before we got them into Portsmouth. They were not sparing of their canvass; but we overhauled them fast, and when night came on we were close enough to keep good sight of them by means of the frigates: and there was no fear, unless a fog or a gale came on, that they could slip away from us. Of course, we kept a bright look-out that night; and I would not have been the midshipman of the watch who lost sight of the *Euryalus* for two minutes.

At daylight on the 21st of October, there they were, well within sight of us. I thought I never should have done counting them; for half the midshipmen of the ship came upon the poop, and, "Brace," says one, "I'll give you a glass of grog to let me have a squint." Well, there was no standing that; not that I cared about the grog, but it looked so much like a young Nelson. "Brace," said another, "just let me look at that large one, for we shall be alongside of her to a certainty." "Only for half a second," said a third. I won't be an instant," said a fourth. And I never should have done my duty, had not the admiral called out, "How many of them are there in all?" and then it was high time I looked for myself. Well, I set to work, and called out, "There are thirty-three ships of the line, my lord, and seven large frigates;" and the signal-lieutenant made the same report.

"Forty in all," said his lordship.

"Yes, my lord," said I. He came upon the poop and took the glass from my hand, and he began to count them himself. I stood a little

way off with my hat in my hand, and I then took a good look at him. His face and features were nothing new to me,—I had unrigged him hundreds of times, and yet I thought I saw something which I never remarked before: he looked more thoughtful. He went on after he had counted thirty out loud,—“Thirty-one,” said he; “ah! that’s a frigate—quite right!—thirty-three,” and so on until he came to the fortieth. “They show well, Hardy,” said he, calling the captain; “they offer battle nobly. They look mixed though,” he continued, looking through the glass and speaking without receiving an answer: “the Frenchman and the Spaniard are placed alternately. That large one, my old friend, I know you again—Spanish beyond a doubt; but the next one is French, from the rake of the masts and the height of the topmasts.” He then took his eye from the glass, and held it for me to take. He appeared very thoughtful for about a minute; when he turned round and said in a quick tone of voice, “Signal-officer!”

“My lord,” was answered before the last

word was half out:—we were all ready for anything, and every man was at his station.

“ Make the signal to ‘ bear down upon the enemy in two lines.’ ”

It was flying in a moment. The wind at this time had become light and variable, and ultimately shifted round towards the westward. The enemy were on the starboard tack, standing to the southward in a close line of battle; they were under easy sail, and certainly never attempted to avoid the action.

Collingwood led the lee-line in the Royal Sovereign; he had thirteen ships, and I kept the list of them: the Mars, Belleisle, Tonnant, Bellerophon, Colossus, Achille, Polyphemus, Revenge, Swiftsure, Defence, Thunderer, Defiance. In the weather-line we had the Victory, Temeraire, Neptune, Conqueror, Leviathan, Ajax, Orion, the old Agamemnon, the Minotaur, Spartiate, Britannia, Africa, Prince, and Dreadnought. And then came a tail of frigates,—the Euryalus, Sirius, Phœbe, Naiad; and after them two of the small fry, the Pickle schooner, and the Entreprenant cutter.

When we bore up, the enemy tacked to the northward, and formed their line on the larboard tack; and when Nelson saw this, and that there was no intention on the part of the Frenchman and the Spaniard to top their booms and be off, he ordered the signal, "Prepare to anchor," to be hoisted. Both of our lines were under all sail; but the wind was very light, and we did not make much way through the water. After Nelson had taken another overhaul at the enemy, who had now formed into a half-moon, he went below to his cabin, and remained there some time. Then it was that he wrote his last wishes about *her*.

We were now standing down with all sail set towards the enemy's line. We had our dinner before we began; although in several of the ships some of the men went without their allowance that day. I was on the poop watching the fleets; and I think I see the scene before me now, as I endeavour to describe it.

It was about this time that we hoisted the signal, "England expects every man will do his duty." The man who said that he found

it impossible to make two men's minds go alike, should have been in our fleet, and he would have witnessed a contradiction. As if by magic, every ship in the fleet received the signal with three cheers,—not your half-drunken brawls, but a burst of voices from men who were resolved to do their duty. It was a cheer which came home to the hearts of us all, and must have convinced our admiral that one feeling animated every breast; he must have felt that he would be supported, heart and hand, and that it was the forerunner of a certain victory. I think I hear the cheers now, as they rolled over the water, receiving an echo from every ship, increasing as the roll increased; and hang me if I don't think the Spaniards heard it at Cadiz and mistook it for thunder. From that moment we rubbed off all kind of thought, and we looked forward to the moment when we should give that big ship a salute which she would remember.

There was a little fun before the fight. Westenburg, a German assistant-surgeon, came from the cockpit equipped for slaughter: he

had his shirt-sleeves turned up, was without his coat and waistcoat, and had covered his pantaloons with an apron; — he looked the butcher. The youngsters on the lower deck, when they saw this preparation to bleed them, pelted the doctor with wads until he made a hasty retreat to his place of security.

I was on the poop, amongst the bunting and Captain Adair's marines. There they were, two deep as they call it, taking it as coolly as most people would when they piped to dinner.

Nelson, after having finished his last yarn upon paper, walked round the decks to see that all was right and ready: he spoke to many of the men, and he encouraged all. It makes a seaman's heart jump when he sees his admiral looking after everything himself. He was pleased with the looks of his men; and when he came on the quarter-deck he was received with three good cheers, and he bowed his head to his crew, who were proud enough of their commander. We all knew him well enough; and it was no easy matter to persuade him to let the *Temeraire* pass the *Victory*, in order to

take off a little of the attention with which the Frenchmen were sure to honour us. He made the signal for "the Temeraire to pass ahead:" but he took good care to carry on every stitch he could cram upon the Victory; so that it was no easy matter to obey the order, for the sailing of both ships was nearly equal. The Temeraire ranged up on our quarter and took the wind out of our sails, and then got a-beam and would have passed us, when Nelson, unable to bear the idea that any one should be exposed to guard him, and forgetting for a moment his previous signal, called out, speaking, as he always did, a little through his nose, "Captain Hervey, I request you to keep in your proper station, which is *astern* of the Victory!"

We now heard the first shot fired; it was at noon precisely, for the master took the sun just as if we were going a long run, and that navigation was in the wind's eye. The Monarca and the Fougueux opened at the same moment upon the Royal Sovereign; and she was steering down right in amongst the enemy as steadily

as if she was going into Portsmouth harbour. The firing attracted the attention of the admiral, who called out, loud enough for us all to hear him, "See how that gallant fellow Collingwood takes his ship into action !" She never yawed a bit, and for ten minutes she never took the least notice of the enemy ; then, by way of making a little smoke, she fired one or two shots, continuing her steady course until twenty minutes after twelve, when she broke through the line of the enemy's fleet, passing astern of the *Santa Anna*, a Spanish three-decker, giving her such a salute in her stern-frame, that the admiral would have caught cold if he slept in the after-cabin, and the ship was before the wind. He then luffed up close alongside, and engaged her to leeward. He was not left unsupported ; for the *Mars*, *Belleisle*, and *Tonnant* were close in the *Sovereign's* wake ; and they soon relieved their gallant admiral from the heavy fire into which he had steered. Never was there a more gallant action—a more noble sight. The guns roared ; and so fast and heavy was the firing, that it sounded like one continued roll.

We all kept our eyes fixed upon the lee-line, until we found out that we were within range, and the enemy had begun measuring distances with us. They fired single shots from two of the nearest ships, until they saw that their shots came well over us, when they opened their broadsides and blazed away as fast as they could. They fired high, as if wishing to riddle us aloft, and thus keep us the longer from coming into close action. They knew we were Nelson's ship; not because we steered gallantly in amongst them, for Collingwood did the same; but because they saw that we made all the signals, and that we had half-a-dozen flags aloft. It was as plain as a pike-staff that we were the admiral's ship; and any man who knew a cocked-hat from a ring-bolt would have known the Victory.

Nelson remained below writing until the first shot struck the Victory. When he came on deck, he observed that the jack-yard of the lower studding-sail was tripped up to clear the tack, for the order was given that no sail was to be taken in for fear of lumbering the

decks ; but the studding-sail halyards and tacks were to be cut away, and the sails let overboard. “Hulloa !” said Nelson, “what ’s all this? Haul that tack out directly, or those d—d Frenchmen will think we are shortening sail because they ’ve hit us !”

We could not make out which was the admiral’s ship, for they wore no colours or flags ; but we knew which was the largest ship, and that was quite enough for Nelson. But it struck us all as odd, that we were going into action with a large fleet, and not one ship showed any flag. We were quite certain they were not English ; and as the whole world were upon our shoulders then, we could not go far wrong in firing into them. It was said that the French were not quite sure the Spaniards would stand the hammering they were sure of getting ; and the Spanish admiral, who, like all Spaniards, was proud and brave, did not think that the friendly assistance of the French was worth much ; and this accounts, as far as any one can understand the order of their line of battle, for both nations being huddled to-

gether. Villeneuve was afraid that the Spanish ships, although they had lions for their figure-heads, would have been selected by Nelson ; and Gravina thought the long topmast of the Frenchman might have the topsail-yard close up to the mast-head, and a few studding-sails dangling to them, directly the firing began.

Now the difference was this : they were both afraid of us, and we did not care one straw for both of them. They must have felt very queer, when Collingwood, as he steered into action, received the fire of the fleet with so much coolness ; and owing to the half-moon form of it, when the Victory got within good range, every ship which could get a gun to bear blazed away at us ; and we looked at them, and some of the fellows forward ran out on the bowsprit-end, and hitting the end of their elbows, as we do when we crack biscuit, told them, (as if they could hear them,) “ There, fire at that, and be d—d to you ! ”

Nelson was standing on the break of the poop with Blackwood and Prowse ;—one commanded the Euryalus, and the other the Sirius ;

—I was within hail of them, and heard all that passed. The shots coming over us thick and fast, Nelson desired them to go on board their own ships. On leaving the Victory, Blackwood said, “I hope, my lord, soon to return and see you master of twenty prizes.” To which Nelson answered, “God bless you, Blackwood; *I shall never see you again!*”—Now if any one from aloft had whispered to my noble commander, as Matson said he felt, that in four hours from that time he would be stretched on the deck in the midshipman’s berth, a dying man; not likely even to live to hear how many of the enemy were taken, much less to receive the greatest blessing a seaman can receive, which is to *see the prize* within hail; not likely to hear the cheers which follow a victory; not able to receive the swords of the captains; and last of all, not to see the flag of Old England blowing out over the tri-coloured rag of republicanism and revolution;—ay, and to that we may add, that if he had been told that he was no more to hear the voices of his men as they gave the huzzas when each flag came down;

and that he no more was to see *her* ;—I say, if he had been told, as Matson was, that his glass was out, and that the sentry at the cabin-door would never turn it again,—why, I say, that under all those circumstances, the man who could stand as coolly as Nelson did, when his ship was every second taking him nearer to his death-bed, would have been the greatest man that ever lived.

It is not like any of us foremast men, who are at the mast-head one moment, and the yard-arm a minute afterwards ; aloft one second, overboard the next ; and who, when the shot takes us off, only give the clerk of the cheque and the ship's clerk the trouble of discharging us dead upon the book, — and when no one would bother themselves about us, except the man who bought our clothes, and the purser's steward, who knows well enough how much tobacco a dead man can swallow, — why, it does not signify much whether we go or not, so long as we do our duty, and the first-lieutenant speaks well of us.—By the by, poor Whipple, the captain's clerk, was saved the trouble of

discharging any one. He is the only instance I ever knew of a man being killed by the wind of a shot. He was sent down to see if the tiller-ropes were shot away: Westphall,* of whom he asked the question, replied, “*No*; I see them working.” At that moment Whipple gave a kind of “*whew!*” and fell dead. He had not a scratch or a mark about him, and the wind must have been too much for his breath.

The breeze was light, and a three-decker does not fly in such weather. We had plenty of time to overhaul our log-books: and that was about the most uncomfortable hour many of us ever knew; for now and then a ship-mate or a messmate was knocked off, and yet not a shot did we return, and little was doing to draw off our attention. At last we got death on the quarter-deck. Whilst Mr. Scott, the secretary, was speaking to Hardy;—whilst they were talking, just as quietly as two shore-going fellows in the street, a round-shot came whizzing along and cut the secretary in half.

* Now Sir George Westphall.

Captain Adair and myself jumped from the poop and tried to get him out of the way before the admiral could see him : but his eye was everywhere ; he saw it, and, like many a man, asked a question, although he knew what must be the answer.

“ Is that poor Scott that ’s gone ?” said he.

“ Yes, my lord,” I answered, for it was of no use denying it, and that was not the moment to be saying anything but the truth.

“ Poor fellow !” he exclaimed.

That business was soon done. I had got back to the poop to my proper station, and began to look about me to see what was going on, when smack came a double-headed shot in amongst the marines, who were drawn up in a line, standing at ease ; and I’m blessed if eight of them ever obeyed the next order of ‘ attention !’—they were as dead as salt herrings. Not two minutes after we had thrown them overboard, comes another shot — smack it struck against the fore-brace-bits on the quarter-deck, sending the splinters right and left. A piece tore off Hardy’s buckle ; and Nelson

looked at him, as much as to say, "What, arn't you killed?" and then quietly remarked, "This is too warm work to last long!" and walked on as coolly as ever.

We had now got down pretty close to the enemy, and began to think of returning them some of the hard-headed messengers they had sent us so plentifully. Our main topmast and all the studding-sail booms were shot away: we were like a winged bird, with our feathers hanging about us, and falling off one by one. We had lost nearly fifty men; but had not fired a shot. Our turn, however, had now come; and the men fore and aft the deck, who had kept a strict silence, began to talk to one another. The side-tackles of the guns were looked to, and the matches were blown,—for at that time we had no locks to make fighting easy and death more sure.

We were steering for the largest ship of the enemy's line, the *Santissima Trinidad*. We knew her from her four tier of ports; for she was the only ship ever built that carried such a number of guns, and she looked as if

three ships had been knocked into one. The ship ahead and astern of her were so close, that we could not have broken the line without running one or the other on board ; and this proves that Villeneuve had well calculated his advantage. If there had been a good breeze of wind, I don't think he would have offered battle : but he knew how long it would take for us to get into action—close action, such as Nelson liked ; and under what great disadvantages we laboured, in being exposed for a quarter of an hour to such a hot raking fire as half-a-dozen line-of-battle ships could pour into us before we could open our broadsides upon them. Now we were close on board of them.

To have continued our course, and endeavoured to pass astern of the big ship, as we called her, we must have got entangled in the enemy's line. Nelson seeing this, raked the *Santissima Trinidad* in passing,—a good example which the *Temeraire* followed ; and then came the *Neptune*, who did the same and finished her : the crash of the three broadsides was tremendous ! Nelson then told Hardy to take his choice

of an opponent, who ordered the helm to be put hard a-port, and the Victory fell alongside of the Redoutable. She was all ready to give us a warm reception ; for, as we came close, she poured into us a broadside of grape, canister, round-shot, langridge ; and if they could have rammed into their guns any tomahawks and boarding-pikes, I think they would have made us a present of them all ! But it put me in mind of the Javanese when they smoke opium : they pay so much for as long a puff as they can take without a bubble bursting ; directly that takes place, down goes the pipe, and off walks the smoker, comfortably drunk. So it was with this ship : she fired one heavy broadside, and that broke many a bubble ; then she knew she was not to try that trick again, so she let down her lower-deck ports, and never fired another gun from that deck during the action.

On the larboard side of us we had the Santissima Trinidad and the Bucentaure. Pat O'Riley, who was captain of one of the quarter-deck guns, roared out, " Och me ! and

I 'm a Catholic too ! does any man think I 'll fire into the Holy Trinity ?—not I. But small blame to the others if they don't catch O'Riley's blessing !" and he blazed away at the Bucen-taure. In the mean time the Temeraire had fixed herself upon the broadside of the Redoutable ; a Spaniard fell on board of the Temeraire ; and the four ships were all in a line, as if we were going to try the battle of St. Vincent's over again. Well, there's only one way of describing an action where the ships are placed broadside to broadside, and when it is give and take, just as hard as both parties can give and take. One immense cloud of smoke almost suffocated us, and for some time it was impossible to make out what the other ships were about. The noise of the guns, the " Blaze away, boys !" the singing out for powder, and the snarl for the match, only came between the shots, which flew about like hail-stones in a gale of wind.

We soon found out that the great guns were the smallest part of the annoyance ; for every now and then whiz came a small whistle of a mus-

ket-shot, and down went a man to a certainty. This amusement to our enemies and death to us, we soon found, came from the different tops of the French and Spanish ships. As this part of the play was not what we exactly bargained for, our marines, who were getting thinned from this hidden fire, thought they might as well return the compliment, and they prepared to make themselves topmen for the occasion. Captain Adair, who was as gallant an officer as the marines ever had amongst them; (and that's saying a great deal for any man, for in that force are to be found as many brave and excellent soldiers as in any regiment or army in the whole world: wherever a danger was to be faced, there you saw a marine; and whenever any cutting-out took place, you would find one or two volunteers from that noble corps, either sitting in the stern-sheets or peeping over the bows of the boats;)—Adair was to lead them aloft. It is not every man who wears a blue jacket and loose trousers who can carry a musket into the main-top on a calm day, even without three enemy's ships alongside of you.

“Follow me!” said Adair, “and I’ll make sailors of you!” Up he jumped upon the ratlines, and before he had got a fathom aloft, he fell down dead upon the deck, having received eighteen musket-balls in him. That shows how well the Frenchmen fired;—eighteen shots in a moment, and all to hit; that shows how sharp the business was!—Since the days when the first admiral, whom they call Noah, sailed about the world, there never was such a roar of cannon on the high seas. No man can relate that action without feeling pity for those who fell: it was a dreadful slaughter. The *Bucentaure* lost three hundred and sixty men *killed* before she struck, and not a ship escaped without a considerable thinning of the different messes.

As yet, all prospered; everything was going on well and leading to a certain victory. Nelson was walking the deck; and in spite of the quick eyes of the Frenchmen aloft who had shot Adair, they had not distinguished him. He wore that day his every-day dress. Some people have since said that he desired his stars

to be placed on his coat ; but they are wrong : on all his coats he had four orders *embroidered*, and Nelson was not a likely man to order them to be *picked out, because* he was going into action. The Redoutable having ceased firing her great guns, was considered to have struck : she had no flag up, nor had she ever hoisted one. I wish I had been alongside of the signal-man—I think he would have shown it for a moment. Nelson desired that the firing should be directed upon the Bucentaure, and from that moment the firing from the tops of the Redoutable increased. I thought I had got into a parcel of birds' nests, the balls came whistling about me so fast ; and then I thought the Frenchmen had mistaken me for Lord Nelson.

I was standing on the starboard side of the poop close to the ladder, watching the admiral, for I could not keep my eyes off him, when I saw him fall. I never felt the splinter which a moment afterwards grazed my leg ; I never touched one of the steps of the ladder, for I made but one leap, and I was the first man alongside of him ; Hardy was the next.

“ I hope it is not mortal,” he said.

Nelson had fallen on his face, and I knelt down to lift him up; when he said, “ They have done for me at last, Hardy.”

“ I hope not, my lord,” he replied; and his heart was too full to say more.

“ Yes,” replied Nelson; “ they have shot my back-bone through.”

Mr. Burke, the purser, and myself, carried him below; and I saw the admiral cover his face with his handkerchief, in order that the crew might not know him. That was of no use; it was along the decks in a minute; who could keep that a secret which every one desired should not happen? But the sight which followed was one that few have ever seen! We took him below; and here were the wounded and the dying, — one groaning in agony, the next showing a silent disdain of all pain. Here was one who, feeling the torment of the tourniquet, had loosened it, and was gradually sinking. There was the hasty of temper cursing his fate, and wishing to be revenged. The roar of the guns thundered over our heads;

the ship trembled with the continued firing; whilst the loud cheers of the crew, as the enemy showed an ensign only to strike it immediately, lighted up the countenance of the admiral, who would brighten with hope, although nearly crushed by pain.

We carried Nelson over heaps of the wounded: a dead silence took place when we got to the cockpit, and every eye was turned towards us to see whom we were bringing. We placed him on a purser's mattress which was spread on the deck; he was immediately stripped, and looked like a skeleton with a skin over it. I always wondered how so weak a frame could enclose so great a heart.—By the side of Nelson was placed young Westphall: he was wounded on the head. I rolled up Nelson's coat and placed it under the youngster: the blood flowed freely, and becoming coagulated, the bullion of the epaulette adhered to the mass. When Westphall was removed, after Nelson's death, we were obliged to cut the bullion off; and this, as every relic of Nelson, was deservedly prized. It was claimed

by Pascoe, who had it set as a brooch, encircled by the words, "England expects every man will do his duty."—Long may Pascoe live to wear it! He was wounded, but he never complained—he bore his pain without a groan; but when he heard Nelson was killed, he burst into tears and cried like a child.*

Beattie came. "It is useless," said Nelson in a faint tone of voice,—“It is useless, Beattie; you can do nothing for me: I feel it in my back; I feel a gush of blood every moment in my breast. Go, Beattie, go to those to whom you *may* be useful!”

The doctor stood watching his countenance; and when the chaplain touched Beattie's arm, and looked at him in the face, as much as to say, "Doctor, what is your opinion?" I overheard the answer, which was only meant for the ears of the captain and the chaplain, "No hope whatever!"

I ran upon deck. I was burning for some

* The eye-witness of the scene would do an injustice if he failed to mention this, and the work of the historian is ennobled by the record of this officer's name.

revenge ; and if I could have boarded the top of that cursed ship, d—n me if I would not have eaten the Frenchman ! I was on the poop in an instant ; I seized a musket, and I watched the mizen-top of the Redoubtable, from which the fatal shot had been fired. There were still two Frenchmen left aloft—the rest had been killed—and one of those had killed the admiral. Mr. Pollard and Mr. Collingwood, two gallant young midshipmen, were the only two left alive on the poop of the Victory :—now I again joined them. I supplied them with cartridges, and loaded my own gun. I saw the man, for we knew him by his glazed hat and white frock jacket. “ Be ready,” said Pollard : “ he will come within sight directly ; he has loaded his musket.”—“ That ’s he ! that ’s he !” we all said at the same moment, and we fired instantly. *His* gun was discharged at the same time,—he fell dead, and I lost my arm ! I was desired to go below ; and I did not stand two calls,—my worst enemy was dead, my best friend was dying. Smarting from the wound, I was going down the poop-ladder, when a small

splinter struck my eye, and caused the most insufferable pain for a short time. Bleeding and almost fainting, I came below. A tourniquet was instantly applied, and some water given me. I was in the act of drinking it, when one of the men said, "Brace, the admiral is near his end." I soon staggered to the midshipmen's berth.

Although the space was kept as clear as possible, in order to give Nelson all the air which could reach him, room was made for me. Every one knew that I had stood by him from the first hour he became a sailor until this last sad moment: besides which, he had inquired for me.

"Who is that?" said the admiral, as he heard the noise in making room for me.

"Brace, my lord," I replied.

"Not wounded, I hope?"

"I have lost an eye and an arm, my lord," said I, "and shall better resemble for the future my glorious commander!"

"Brace, come nearer," (his voice was getting very weak and indistinct;) "place your ear

close to my mouth; listen." He then whispered, "She is provided for; she can never know what it is to want; and so far I have done my duty to one whose services to me I can hardly ever requite. Hardy,"—(the captain inclined his head,) "this is my oldest follower, wounded—unfit any longer to serve his Majesty; to you I leave it to place him in Greenwich." Whilst he was saying this, I had taken his hand; and as I kissed it, he felt the tears which dropped upon it.

"Listen to me," he said. "When you get to England and are discharged, go to Merton; tell her of my last moments—tell her I have left a memorial in her behalf;—tell her, that even now, when all is shortly to pass away, I thought of her; that my last prayer was for her; tell her——" At this moment a loud cheer from the crew of the Victory startled him.

"What is that, Hardy?" he said; but Hardy was on deck: he returned about a minute afterwards, when Nelson repeated the question.

"It was the men cheering for the tenth ship of the enemy's line which has struck."

“None of ours have struck, I hope, Hardy?”

“There’s no fear of that, my lord,” replied the captain.

“Then I am more easy,” the admiral continued. “Hardy, I am a dead man: I am going fast—it will be all over with me soon.”

In the mean time, whilst this overwhelming event was taking place, the battle had been nobly fought along the whole line. After Collingwood had raked the Santa Anna and ranged up alongside of her, he was nobly seconded by the Mars, commanded by Worthy Duff, as he was called — and he merited the name. He, poor fellow! after fighting like a good officer, was nearly cut in half by a round shot, and England lost another hero. The Sovereign, after her first flourish with the Santa Anna, fell foul of every ship, Spanish or French, within reach of her guns; whilst the Bellerophon, after breaking the line, got aboard of the Aigle, an eighty-gun ship. The fore-yard of the Bellerophon caught the main-yard of the Frenchman, and a heavy fire was immediately directed upon her from the star-board bow; the larboard bow guns were blazing

away into the Monarca: at the same time she was receiving and returning, without much time being lost, the fire of the Bahama, a Spanish eighty-gun ship, which had drifted on the Bellerophon's larboard quarter; whilst a ship, as large as her name was long, the St. Juan Nepomuceno, got athwart her stern; and a French eighty-gun ship, the Swiftsure, touched her up on the starboard quarter.

The Bellerophon's men never thought of the odds against them; they fought like English tars—the more they have upon them, the stronger they rise.

Several hand-grenades were thrown into the lower-deck ports of the Bellerophon, and caused great havoc amongst the men; and had there been a breeze, they must have mustered the sails to see which were missing. The main and mizen topmast fell over the starboard side; whilst the sails, the main-topsail, and top-gallant sails caught fire. But still they gallantly blazed away; still they were able to show that Collingwood's line could fight under their admiral as well as the Victory's

could fight under Nelson. Cheer after cheer followed, as the men saw the results of their bravery, and were convinced that the signal which had been hailed with such pride, "England expects that every man will do his duty," had been most gloriously answered by every man and boy in the fleet:—and if I was to give an account of what Moorsom did, and every other captain throughout the British fleet, why, I should never come to an end. But I mention the Bellerophon, because the Frenchmen became better acquainted with her afterwards.

The action had now been maintained with bravery by the French and the Spaniards for three hours. The victory was won; ten ships had struck; but the last sad result was yet to take place. It is of no use drawing a picture of what occurred in the midshipmen's berth of the Victory; the greatest admiral England ever produced was now stretched out breathing his last. From time to time, as the service would permit, Hardy came below and reported to the admiral how the day went; and

it was when Hardy returned and reported that ten had struck, that Nelson said, "I am growing weaker and weaker; it is impossible I can live: my back-bone is shot through; I have no feeling below my breast, it is all gone;—you know it," he said, as he looked at Beattie. "I know it; I feel something rising in my breast." It was when a partial lull had occurred that the Victory fired her whole larboard broadside at once; it shook the ship from stem to stern; then came a silence again. Nelson said, in a firm tone of voice, "Oh! victory, victory!" and then added, "How dear is life to all men!—Hardy," he continued, "send my CARCASS to England."—Carcass was the word: it was an odd word to use at such a moment, but I'll swear to it, for it struck me as a cool disdain of death, although he had, not a minute before, declared how sweet was life.

In a few minutes, Hardy, who had been on deck, returned again.

"Fourteen, my lord," he said—"fourteen have struck!" A gleam of animation lighted up Lord Nelson's countenance before he died.

“ I bargained for twenty !” he said. “ What have you done, Hardy ?”

The captain answered, “ I have sent Lieutenant Hill to Lord Collingwood, to mention you are wounded, my lord, and to beg of him to make the requisite signals.”

“ Not whilst I live !” he said with some energy,—“ not whilst I am alive, Hardy ! Anchor, Hardy, anchor !” And had that order been obeyed, in spite of all that has been said, Portsmouth harbour would have had more prizes in Rotten Row.

“ God bless you, Hardy !” he murmured. “ Kiss me.”

It was now fast growing towards the last moment of his life ; and although there were many present, yet not a word was spoken.

The eye began to warn us that the hero of the Nile and Trafalgar was fast sinking ; it no longer sparkled up as the cheers were heard below ; whilst he breathed with great difficulty, and when he spoke, it was in a low and indistinct voice. Once or twice he made an attempt ; but the restlessness of his spirit was fast sub-

siding. The chaplain stood by, and watched the last breathings of this great man. It was then that he spoke again, — ay, and about sins and errors, which even the best of us may commit; for he was too much of a Christian to die without acknowledging them. This done, he again thought of his king, his country,—of *her*. “Remember,” he said, “I leave her and my daughter Horatia as a legacy to my country. I have done my duty to my king; but who shall say I have done my duty to my God!” The last words which he uttered were, “Thank God, I have done my duty!” and shortly afterwards the under jaw fell, and Nelson of the Nile was no more! I watched his countenance: I saw the last motion of his lip; I saw the glassy stillness of his eye — the dead cold paleness of his forehead — the fluttering tremour which shook his whole frame; and when Beattie said, and loud enough for all to hear, “He is gone!” I fainted on the table, and was carried away to the cockpit.

CHAPTER II.

The sons of Britannia triumphant shall mourn
The loss of her hero, of Nelson the brave,
Who fought, bled, and conquered, but ne'er can return
To claim from our gratitude more than a grave !

Sea Song.

WHEN I was broad awake again, I was destined to have the limb cut off—my good right arm ; it was soon done, and done well ; and I remember how odd I felt when I saw one of the assistants walk away with my flipper : then it was that I became lop-sided, and had only one eye in my bows, like a Maltese boat. Just as they were finishing the parcelling which they wound round and round the stump, I heard some one groaning near me ; and there, sure enough, was Bob Matson. He had been wound-

ed by a piece of iron in the side ; and though he lingered long enough to give the last cheer, as the last flag came down and the firing ceased, yet he never saw the sun set : before that time he was overboard. Poor fellow ! his last word was “ Fanny ! ” Well, he had his heart in the right place ! — Bob was not the only one who had a hint. Smith, a midshipman, wrote a letter to his parents to “ beg them to bear his loss with resignation, for that he *was to die* in the great action : ” he was right—a shot *unmanned* him ; he loosened the tourniquet after drinking a glass of water, and died. He was a brave and a good young gentleman.

In the glorious action of Trafalgar, out of the twenty for which our brave commander had bargained, we got nineteen, either taken, sunk, burnt, or wrecked : four which escaped us were taken by Sir Richard Strachan ; and I suppose there never was or ever will be again such a noise on the Atlantic.

It was not long after this fight before we were all in England again. We had placed the body of Nelson in spirits, in order to con-

vey it safely to England ; and we heard some reports about tapping the admiral. If it was done,—it was of course on account of the bravery of Nelson that the seamen required some of his spirit. This is true, that owing to the cask in which Nelson was placed being badly headed up, when fermentation took place, the head flew off, and up jumped the admiral. The sentinel left his post without being relieved.—It was the intention of Collingwood to send the body home in the *Euryalus* ; but even I, wounded as I was, turned out to join the ship's company in humbly begging, that, as the admiral fought with us and fell on our own deck, we might see all that was left of him safely in England.

We went to Gibraltar, where they embalmed the body ; and on the 4th of November we sailed, in company with the *Belleisle*, for England. We had a long and a bad passage, for we did not arrive at Portsmouth until the 2nd of December. Then every flag was hoisted half-mast, and many hundreds crowded upon the platform to see the ship which had Nelson's

body on board. Although many cursed the wind which so obstinately hindered our reaching England before, yet *I* blessed it ; for the delay which it caused gave time for my recovery.

It was on the 21st of October that I was wounded : on the 30th of November I was well again ; short of a flipper, to be sure, and not quite so good a signal-man as one who squints and looks at both lines at once ; but I was still the man that put my foot afloat with Nelson, and who had stuck by him until his death. I had yet to see him buried. Why, when a messmate is knocked off the hooks, or loses the number of his mess from sickness or accident, who stand by the grating at the gangway when the flag is placed over him before he is launched, and who launch him, but those who have eaten, drunk, and lived with him ? Well, then, should an admiral like Lord Nelson be left to strangers ? No ; I saw it all : and although I am a man, yet I never thought the worse of myself for feeling like a man ; and when I saw the coffin for the last time, if I had had both my flippers, I couldn't have swabbed up the

tears, which went rushing out of my eyes like an ebb-tide at London-bridge.

The Victory, hardly seaworthy now,—for she had received eighty shots between wind and water, and her spars were wounded—was ordered to Sheerness to be paid off, and we arrived on the 17th of December. There it was that I saw the very coffin which Captain Hallowell, after the Nile, had given to Nelson, brought on board; and the last service I ever performed for him who had when alive been a constant friend to me and mine, was to dress the body before it was placed in the coffin. Yes; I placed the last rigging over his mast-head; I put on the shirt, silk stockings, breeches; and I tied the white handkerchief round his neck, and bound another round the forehead. The body was then sent to Greenwich; and I was allowed, by the kindness of Captain Hardy and Mr. Gray, to go on board the yacht. On the 24th we landed it, having the flag of the Victory over it. It was carried by eight of the Victory's men, (I was one,) and placed in the Painted Hall.

They have placed a mark upon the deck of the Victory where Nelson fell when he was wounded. Once a year, for some years afterwards, before time had a little darkened my other daylight, I used to go to look at that diamond on the deck.

Hallowell's coffin was placed in another coffin, and on a gold plate was written all the titles of Lord Nelson. On the 5th, 6th, and 7th of January 1806, the body lay in state; and on the Sunday, when the gates were opened, several people nearly lost their lives from the rush which was made to gain admission. They got into the Hospital easy enough; but they could not get into that hall quite so easily. We had a party of the Victory's crew with boarding-pikes, and we soon let them see that we knew the use of them: so we got on according to orders, orderly enough. We let in fifty at a time, as nearly as we could count them: they couldn't all see, for it was calculated that fifty thousand people came to Greenwich on that day, and that twenty thousand returned unable to gain admittance.

The day before the funeral, forty-six seamen and fourteen marines belonging to the *Victory* landed at Greenwich; and every one of them had been wounded on the 21st of October. Lord Hood met them, and told them that they might go and see the last of their admiral. I was with them. I watched them; and I feel I am doing a duty to those gallant shipmates of mine when I say, that out of the whole of them, only two did not let the current of their eyes get the better of their lids: they felt as much, I dare say, although they did not show it, as the others did.

On the 8th of January Nelson was removed from Greenwich to the Admiralty. Nearly thirty years have passed since all the great men of the land and many of the crew of the *Victory* saw their favourite hero buried in St. Paul's. I believe every man in London was there. The river seemed more like bridges of boats than a stream of water. Guns were fired, and every soul stood uncovered as the body passed them.

On the morning of the 9th all London was

alive before daylight, and soldiers were placed to keep the middle of the streets clear : hundreds and thousands witnessed the scene. The Duke of York led the line ; and amongst the great men who honoured his memory by attending him to his grave, was the Prince of Wales. Nelson was buried on that day : and many's the time since, great men have died and been taken to their graves ; but we have never seen—no, not even when the King died—anything like the feeling which was uppermost on the 9th of January 1806. I don't like even to think of it ; for on that day my kindest, best of friends, was launched for ever.

My duty done to him who had ever been my friend, and when my heart beat right again, I resolved to obey his last command and go to Merton. As yet I had not seen my wife ; for she was living near Rochester, on fifty pounds a year, allowed by her brother-in-law, Mr. Tapes, the wine-merchant of Exeter. She was well to do in the world, for she never ran in debt, and she therefore had a clear conscience with man. She was not afraid of any lubberly

chap in sliding gunter-boots running aboard of her like a pirate and selling her traps to pay her debts;—no, she was all clear fore and aft, and cared for no one on the face of the earth but myself.

I went to Merton and saw *her*. It was a meeting I shall long remember. She was sitting in deep mourning before her writing-desk, and on it lay a picture of Nelson: it was so like him, that I could have sworn it was alive. She had her hands clasped together, crying like a child; and when I got on board the room, and had put my hair straight with my hand, and lifted up my leg and bowed, she looked at me. She held her hands open, and after clasping them in an agony of grief, ran forward to greet me.

“Come here, Brace,” said she; “sit down. There now, tell me—don’t mind my tears, I shall soon command them,—tell me, what did he say? What were his last words? Did he speak of me—did he?”

I was all aboard in a moment; her greeting had taken me smack aback, and before I

could get round on the other tack, I found myself at anchor, and this beautiful lady close athwart my hawse. I should soon have moored ship and made myself comfortable; but when I saw her, as she said her tears would soon be over, wringing her white hands as if she had been one of the fore-topmen wringing swabs, I somehow felt a kind of shiver, and I believe I looked as white as a ghost.

“ You are ill,” she said : “ I ’ll get you some wine. I hope I did not hurt your arm ? ”

“ No, ma’am,” said I ;—and if I had been seized up to the gangway, or had the yard-rope round my neck, I could not have said another word. I felt myself trying to bolt my tongue, and I knew that I was anything else but a man.

“ Tell me, trusty old friend and companion — tell me now, when he was wounded, did he speak of me ? Didn’t he say something kind of me, even when the victory was not decided ? Here, dry your tears. I can bear it all now ; tell me what he said.”

There was something so hurried in her manner—something so wild in her eyes, which now were dry and burning, that I was alarmed ; and that alarm made me myself again. I began,

“ When he was wounded, my lady——”

“ Yes ! yes !” she interrupted ; “ never mind that form,—go on.”

“ He sent for me,” I continued ; “ he knew it was all over with him in this world, and so he told the doctor.”

“ Well, go on,—what do you stop for ? go on.”

“ Well, my lady, he told me to put my ear close to his mouth, and then he whispered, ‘ When you get home, go to Merton,—see *her*—tell her I have left a memorial in her behalf——’ ”

“ I care not,” she said, in a tone of voice which startled me, “ about memorials ! Tell me what he *said* about me.”

“ It ’s all about you, ma’am,” I continued, —and here I looked round the room for Jane.

“ You shall see little Jane directly if you will but continue.”

“ ‘Tell her,’ I continued, “the admiral said, — ‘Tell her that even now, when all is shortly to pass away, I thought of her — that my last prayer was for her ;—tell her——’ ”

I had nothing more to say ; she had thrown herself upon her knees, and lifting her eyes aloft, and holding her hands closed together, she seemed to be offering up a prayer.

At this moment the door opened, and little Jane, dressed in black, came bounding into the room. She stopped in an instant as if suddenly struck with fear ; for she saw her whom she considered as her mother on her knees, and her face showing dreadfully white from the darkness of her dress.

The child did not know me ; for when I saw *her* throw herself upon her knees, I bowed my head down low and kept my hand over my face. “ Oh ! mamma, mamma ! ” the little innocent thing said, and threw herself on the neck of her and burst out crying.

“ It ’s Brace,” *she* said.

The child instantly left her and ran to me. When I held up my head, she wound her little

arms round me, and kissed me again and again: but when she saw that one arm was gone, and one eye closed, she cried out in distress, "Oh! who has done this—who has done this!"

Well, there we were; and though I had seen some scenes in my time, and had been in the cockpit when arms and legs were not worth belonging to their owners, yet I never felt as I did then. *She* remained for some time kneeling, and I was afraid to stir or to speak: at last she rose, kissed the picture over and over again, and left the room.

When she was gone, I felt as if a load was taken off my breast, and I could breathe again. I caught Jane in my arm, and placing her on my knee looked at her full in the face, and said, "My little cherub, you shall never want a father!"

Jane was much improved in appearance, and the black—which I suppose she wore for her father, but of whom I never spoke—made her look prettier than before. She sat upon my knee looking me full in the face without say-

ing a word, although tears came running out of her eyes; and when I said, "Cheer up, my little angel! what do you cry for?" she never said a word, but taking hold of the sleeve of my jacket, she shook it, and then burst out a-crying.

"Oh, is that all, my little darling?" said I: "don't mind that; I have had my revenge for it. The Frenchman who knocked it off won't come to shake hands with me; and I'll make him a present of my eye—a dead eye will serve his turn now."

The little creature soon cheered up, and we forgot all about legs, and arms, and eyes, and got talking of what she was about, and how *she* bore the account when it first reached her, and so on; when in the lady came again. Now she was quite herself; she came to the chair upon which she had been seated before, and looking me full in the face, she said, "Now, you will not see any more of this woman's weakness. It's hard—very hard to part with those we love—for whom we have sacrificed our own and the world's esteem, and

such a one as he was : but it is done, —he is dead and buried, and we must strive to surmount what we cannot control. Now, tell me slowly again the very words — mind, I remember what you told me before—tell me the very words.”

I repeated the same words again ; for after the action, when my arm was off, and I in my hammock, one of the midshipmen, for whom I had long had a particular respect, and who was young Pollard, the one who stood on the poop to be shot at like a chicken tied to a stake, came to see me. After asking how I felt, and whether it was great pain sawing the bone, and such like questions that came home to my feelings, he said he would do anything he could for me now and always. “ Well, sir,” said I, “ I believe you, because I have never known a real brave fellow either a hypocrite or a liar ; and the only favour I have to ask of you *now* is to get a pen and ink and a piece of paper, and write down what I am going to tell you.”

He thought I had received some hint

about fitting foreign, and that the amputation was like greasing the ways before the dry shores are slapped off. He looked me in the face, and said with much kindness, "No, no, Brace,—no fear of that now, at any rate; for before I came to see you, I asked Dr. Beattie what he thought of your case, and he laughed and said, 'In three weeks' time he'll be standing on the poop with a glass under his arm again, learning to make his left eye do duty for his right.' "

I understood him, and told him it was not that at all; that I had no fears about going abroad without sailing orders; but that I wanted him to put down the words which Nelson had whispered to me before his death. This he did; and by way of making *her* convinced that I had not spoken one word more than *he* had said, I showed her the paper, which I had tied up in the corner of my neck-handkerchief. This seemed to please her, and she read it over and over again, and asked about Mr. Pollard, and then made me relate the whole day's work from beginning

to end. She got on well until I came to the part where Nelson was wounded; then she clasped both her hands tight enough to have broken a walnut, and I stopped.

“Go on,” she said. “I have heard Nelson say that it was possible to stop pain by great exertion, and that sometimes men during punishment put a bullet in their mouths, and by biting it with all their force deadened the feelings:—Go on; I am only doing that in another manner.”

Occasionally she stopped me during the running up of the log, and would ask whether, when he first saw the fleet, his right-arm stump worked about as it used to do, and then whether he thrust his left into his coat-pocket as he was accustomed to do when much excited. But when I came to the wound and the cockpit scene, she never said a word, but kept her eyes fixed upon me.

Twice she made me run over the action; then folding the paper up, she put it in her desk and said, “In return for this, I will show you another, the last he ever gave me

—at least before he sailed.” She then handed me a written memorandum concerning both myself and Jane. Jane was to remain with her to be her companion, and to be provided for. I was either to remain upon the pension-list or to live under her protection; and it finished thus:—“If anything should happen to me—and I can hardly hope to escape this time—tell my old and faithful follower, that had he allowed me to promote him as I had wished, he would have been a captain, and perhaps have forgotten me; but that now the sincerity of his friendship to the last will be best known by the contents of this paper.”

“I cannot give it you, Brace,” she said, “for I will not part with one line he ever wrote; but as surely as I sit here, his desire shall be obeyed: Jane shall be provided for, — you shall never want. Now, how can I serve you?—what do you intend doing?”

“Why, ma’am,” said I, “I think it’s all right for those to serve me whom I have served; and as I have served my country for

years and years, and have left an eye and an arm behind me, and, besides, been with Nelson since he put his foot afloat, I think I may ask for Greenwich without being impertinent. And as for what you've read me, ma'am, this is all I have got to say about it: I would rather have been Nelson's coxswain, messmate, shipmate, and servant, than be any captain in his majesty's service, excepting one, and that man is Captain Hardy. I'm much obliged to you, ma'am,—very," said I; "but if I go anywhere, I must go to my wife—I can't desert her,"—(Whew! I saw I was on the wrong tack again, so round I came upon my heel,)—"for she's in great distress about my hull being so cut about, and I must endeavour to see her more comfortable. As for Jane, she loves you;—and I wonder who could look at you and not love you!"

At this she smiled.

"Well, ma'am, as I was a-saying in regard to Jane, she cannot do better than to stay with one who has been so kind to her; and for myself, I only beg that you will assist my

claim, and I don't ask it as a favour to be admitted into Greenwich. There, since I can no longer serve afloat, I can keep life and soul together, and perhaps, before the signal is given to part company, I may meet many more of my old friends. God bless you, Jane! give me a kiss, there 's a cherub! Lord love you! she 's the very image of her poor mother!" Here I got on the wrong tack again; so I gave the child a squeeze, and making my best bow to her, I backed and filled out of the room like a collier tiding it down the River. She said she would not forget me, and that, before the day was over, she should have an opportunity of being of some service to me.

When I got clear of the harbour, I began to trim my sails according to the breeze. To say that I liked her would be a falsehood; I never liked her enough to call her by name, and I never have and never will. Some, who handle pens more like knives than paper-stainers, have abused her in a manner not unlike some of our women at Billingsgate; but I'll

give the devil his due at all times. This is what she was: she was a woman with all the spirit of a man and all the weakness of her own sex; she had love enough for twenty men, but she was jealous and revengeful. When the Neapolitan Prince was hung, she showed more of the fury than the woman. When Nelson died, she became natural. She was beautiful beyond description: when she spoke, she looked through you; and although Nelson stood all the guns at Aboukir, he could not stand the broadside of her eyes. She had a figure and form which became the study of the painter: she was like Mount Etna,—all quiet and cold without, all fire and heat within. She humbled him who had humbled thousands; she conquered him whom the whole world could not conquer; she occasioned the only spot upon the character, public or private, (for the execution of that prince was her work,) of the greatest admiral England or the world ever saw. Then, when I shook all these contradictions together, making a kind of punch of the mixture, I came

to the same conclusion as the Irishman in the after-guard who was employed handing a hawser up the after-hatchway,—“That no doubt the rope was strong enough to hang a thousand men, but that he was very glad to have seen the end of it.” So was I: I never hoped or wished to see her again. She was powerful enough to have ruined a thousand men; and all I can say for Nelson is, that had he withstood her charms, he must have been something more than a man, or something less than one.

I was discharged from the *Victory*; and that was the last ship I ever put my foot on board of. I visited her frequently afterwards, but I never went on board any other ship. I had now nothing to do but to look out for myself and my wife, and leave Jane under the care of *her*, and let her take any slant of wind which might lead to a comfortable anchorage for life: I therefore steered away to Rochester, and had the satisfaction of finding a warm heart and a warm cottage ready to receive me.

For the first week we talked of nothing but Nelson and the action ; and if I had been given to liquor, I never need have paid for the value of a pint of beer. All England was alive to the consequences of this noble victory : the sea was clear, and it was imagined a peace would soon follow. Many and many's the time that I have been stopped and questioned about the admiral ; and my poor wife began to think, from the kindness I received, that I might one day be first lord of the Admiralty, or governor of Greenwich.

Of her brother-in-law she never had received a word ; but the payment of fifty pounds was continued regularly : on this, and the little a seaman could spare, she contrived to weather the gale outside by making the harbour snug and comfortable. I looked at Susan as a seaman looks at his ship : she was a little the worse for the wear and tear of life, but her dear eyes sparkled with joy when she saw me ; and I thought, “ Well, now I have done my duty to my king, I'll stay at home in peace and quietness, and endeavour to rub on

through life until the last pipe to muster aloft is heard."

But I soon learnt that something else but the intention was requisite—it was more money. Tapes's children must be fed and clothed; and although Susan cut and contrived, and I never threw away a piece of tobacco, yet we saw just as clearly as we saw the church, that my coming in amongst the squadron would occasion a greater expense: the prize-money for Trafalgar was yet to be paid, and *she* on whom I was to rely had been left as a legacy to the country, and had little enough for herself.

I therefore saw it was of no use eating the bread of idleness, and I could not turn my hand to anything; so I got a gentleman, who behaved kindly to me, to write to Captain Hardy about Greenwich. I did not ask in vain: about a week afterwards I received a letter, desiring me to present myself at the Hospital for inspection; and a fortnight from the receipt of the letter, there was I, Ben Brace, moored for life in the snug harbour for worn-

out shipping. No longer did I wear a straw-hat with a broad ribbon and Victory upon it ; my large trousers, round jacket, and long-quartered shoes were laid up in ordinary ; and I saw myself in a gold-laced scraper, a large blue coat, big enough for a smuggling Jew, and I kept it close buttoned for the first week rather than show my slender shanks : then came a pair of buckles, to finish off ; but I held on my tail ; and although they clapped me into dock to repair my hull, and rigged me afresh from stem to stern, yet I wouldn't allow the barber to cut off the tow-rope of my head, and I had it parcelled up and stowed away under my collar.

I told Susan to weigh her anchor from Rochester and to rendezvous at Greenwich, and I got a decent cottage outside of the gates. When she was safely in port, I began to look about me, and to think of all I had gone through until this time. I, who had seen the seas roll over thousands,—who had rocked about the world like a child in a cradle,—who had been tossed about like sea-weed, at last had taken

fast hold of the land : I, who had seen the slave at his work in the West, and the Turk at his pipe in the east, — who had sawed through the ice of the North, and had weathered the gales in the Cape, was now for life a Greenwich pensioner.

CHAPTER III.

Yet still I am enabled
To bring up in life's rear,
Although I 'm quite disabled,
And lie in Greenwich tier.

DIBDIN.

It was in 1806 that I moored for a full due ; and day after day and year after year passed along, bringing no changes, but the weather out of doors, and now and then a new pensioner without a leg inside. As we dropped off, there we were laid ; and I felt a curious change from the rough life I had led, to the steady one I was now called upon to pursue.

In Greenwich we have each our cabin—at least it is so with the oldest of us. Now and then one or two are clapped into the same berth ;

and it requires some good management to stow away more than two thousand of us. Of course, amongst such a number I found many of my old shipmates: some who had sailed with Nelson in the *Agamemnon*; some who had been on board the *Vanguard*, and made a jump from the Nile to Greenwich; and all who had seen much service.

It was a great change in my life, from the constant employment of a ship to the quiet of the Hospital. Amongst the number of old, armless, legless men heaped together in this huge palace, I remarked that nearly all had grown more thoughtful: that, although we fought our battles over and over again, the manner of relating them was much altered; very few of those oaths which are so common round the galley-fire, or under the lee of the weather-bulwark, were used; and on Sunday, when we all mustered in our clean rigging, I always remarked that after church some of the oldest amongst us got upon the benches with Bibles in their hands. There the old fellows might be seen with their legs crossed and their

spectacles wiped, looking up themselves, and reading with much attention what before they had long neglected. For myself, as may be seen, I had never joined in all the wild sprees of my shipmates. I had been made a companion in my first adventures by Nelson; and he, although he had a little of the devil in his composition, never was one of the shore-going rioters. He was always, as the black fellows say, "Working head-work, massa," and more steady than his messmates.

The first thing I found when I was admitted on the books of the hospital, and made a boatswain's mate,—for I had held a petty-officer's rating ever since I had been on board the *Boreas* in 1784,—was, that the provisions were as much as a man could eat with his wife's assistance; and the tobacco-money, although it would not buy the Lord Mayor's barge, which we saw every now and then all gilt and gingerbread like a beadle's coat, yet it lent a hand at the cottage to make Susan more comfortable. She was better off than any other man's wife in Greenwich; but she had been in more easy

circumstances ; and we never like to go back when we ought to go forward.

It must be a man with the stomach of a boy who can get through the allowance. Who but an alligator could eat seven loaves of bread, five pounds of meat, a pint of peas, a pound and a quarter of cheese, two ounces of butter, and drink fourteen quarts of beer in a week, and then have eighteen-pence for tobacco ? and I want to know, who amongst the whole ships' companies in the navy would begrudge the six-pence a month he pays to Greenwich, when in his old days, after all the stuff of youth is worked up into twice-laid cordage, only fit to be kept dry, and not have much strain upon it, he is moored in a palace—better than belongs to any king in the world ; where he is fed without fear of the purser's steward being a cheat ; where he is nursed when he is ill, and buried amongst his old shipmates when he is dead ? And this is not all for us alone : any man who has been rendered unfit for sea-service by defending any ship belonging to an English subject, may have the satisfaction, although he

was in the merchant-service, of dying amongst the best of us in Greenwich.

And many a time I have thought, that although it does look very hard to be pressed into service, where a man begins by being sea-sick and finishes by being short of a leg or so, and is made to follow a life he never likes ; yet, when he gets old, and moors in Greenwich, I don't think any one who had been pressed would say it was a bad day's work when they docked his coat-tails and made his own tail grow. 'I've talked to hundreds of them about it, and I never knew one who did not think the press-gang the best gang he ever got amongst. All I know is, that it now is many a year since I first shipped the uniform and stuck on a cocked-hat ; and although I have been wandering about for nearly thirty years, yet I never had cause to complain of a harsh word being used towards me, and I have never been unhappy for an hour since I came within the gates.

Our lives went on steadily enough, and we often at the end of a year sat down and won-

dered how we had got through three hundred and sixty-five days; and yet years and years crept away until the latter end of 1816, without anything happening to change my thoughts. I was growing older and older, and yet I was a stout able-bodied man, and at a pinch might have gone afloat again. Once or twice at the beginning of my being a pensioner, Jane had come down to see me; she always brought a little money, but she stayed a very short time. As she grew up to be a woman, she became less frequent in her visits, until at last, I suppose, she got ashamed of being seen walking with an old man in knee-breeches; and after 1814, when she was about sixteen years of age, and as beautiful as ever a woman could be, she forgot poor old Ben Brace,—at least I thought so,—and for years she never came again.

I had been rather ill about this time, and as my wife was admitted as one of the nurses, every care was taken of me. At the close of 1816 I was out again, having undergone a thorough repair, and being ready to ride out any gale. I was walking about, wondering of

what use I was, when I saw an economical pensioner stumping along : he had lost both legs, and therefore had no occasion for the blue stockings ; he had shipped on the regulation-pins, and looked for all the world like a barrel of beer upon stumps. Well, when I saw that he was not used to his new timbers, but that he laboured heavily, and every now and then, when a squall took his three-cornered scraper and nearly lifted it off his noddle, in putting up his hand to save it, his balance was not quite sure, but he pitched about like a Billy-goat before he got steady again, I made sail to lend him a hand ; but it was dangerous to come alongside of him, for his arms were flying about like the telegraph on the top of the Hospital.

When I got within hail I offered him assistance, seeing that he had been so riddled about the hull that he was scarcely sea-worthy, and he answered,

“ I shall never weather the corner, messmate, unless you take me in tow ; for I find it preciously difficult to keep upon an even keel

with these moveable shores ; and, although I have got these two sticks, like shrouds to a wounded mast, yet I always feel as if I was going by the board ; if I get upon my beam-ends, I shall never right again !”

“ Why, shipmate,” said I, “ you have not practised long upon this tack, I should think, and you look pretty weak in the bends ; I take it that a man does not lose both his pins without being on his beam-ends for some time.” I looked at the poor fellow’s face as I made this remark, but it was so thin and wizened that it might have done for a lantern and not hid much of the light. His cocked-hat placed athwart-ships did not come enough over his head, and I never remember to have seen such a woe-begone phiz since I was a pensioner. He stopped every now and then, and at last I brought him to an anchor on one of the benches just in time to save him from fainting.

“ I shall get used to these timbers in time, I suppose ; but it is hard work for the knees : I never used to trouble them much before,

and now they don't like the work;—it makes me feel sea-sick again.”

“Ay,” said I, “it will all come right in time: when we are young it requires lots of practice before we can toddle upon the legs we are born with; and when we get old we never learn so quickly as when we were young. But tell us, shipmate, where did you lose them?”

“At Algiers,” he replied; “and the devil take all Turks who ever smoked pipes and wore turbans! I should not have minded one, and then to have got Greenwich; but to slap them both off with one shot was sharp work—and for me, too, who have been in so many actions and escaped. It is, as you say, rather hard to learn even patience when one's old. I never could wait without kicking my heels at the grog-tub when first I went to sea, and I was one of the worst hands on board to stand doing nothing at quarters when the ship was in a blaze and only the firemen at work.”

“What ward are you in?” I asked.

“The Victory,” said he: “but I’m hardly clear of the sick-list yet; and in this squally weather, with the wind veering about like a dog-vane in a calm, with rain one moment and a glimpse of the sun the next, I feel my feet itching and aching just as plainly as if they were on.”

“What actions were you in, messmate, besides this one against the stone walls,—and a good one it was?”

“What actions! I’m blessed if I must not look up my memory, and shake my noddle before I shall remember them all. Why, I was in the Surveillance, and was blown up,—that was an action I never wished to try again, for, if I had lost my legs then, I should have been drowned.—Well, then, I was in St. Vincent’s.”

“What ship?” said I quickly; “what ship, messmate?”

“Why, I was in the Agamemnon with Nelson.”

“In the Agamemnon with Nelson?—I don’t remember you.”

“Nor I you in that three-cornered Portuguese man-of-war-looking skull-thatcher,” said he; “but just take the top off your mast-head, and if you’ve a feature left in your face, I’m not the one to forget an old shipmate, however much bad weather and rough usage may alter him.”

I took off my hat and flattened my hair down over my forehead and lugged out my tail, and then looking him in the face said, “Now, shipmate, take a good overhaul; who do you think I am?”

“Why,” said he in a moment, “if you had another toplight, and got your starboard David on again, I should say that you would be very like Ben Brace.”

“Give us a flipper! messmate, I’m he snug enough. But who the devil are you? I don’t remember you at all?”

“No wonder, Ben,” he said, as he shook me with a friendly grip by the hand—“no wonder; when half a man has fed the sharks, t’other half never looks like what it was. I’m thinking that, when men lose both their legs, they

get like hump-backed people, all alike in the face. But now look at me without this gold-laced topper, don't you know me now?"

"No more, shipmate," said I, "than if you were a Turk."

"Then I'm blessed if poor Tom Toprail is not changed for somebody else; and I wish I had his legs, whoever he may be."

"Lord love you, Tom!" said I, "why, is it you, or only a part of you? Let's look at you again; why you're as thin as a midshipman's boy, and your clothes hang upon you like a purser's shirt on a handspike; your nose has got a slew to starboard, and the tow-rope of your head is as white as a hawser under water. But now I look at you again you are something like him. Well, tell us all about it; how have they used you lately?"

"Oh, well enough, Ben," he replied, "until this last affair against those Turks; I got through Trafalgar without a scratch. I got spliced one day and drew it the next, as I told you before.

"And, now," said he, "I must be off, and

get upon my broadside, for I feel as if this wind is not doing me any good. Lord, Ben! how odd it is for a seaman to be afraid of the wind! but just now I feel all the pains of the devil shooting right through me; and I'm told not to be out in the gale when there's a snug harbour for my hull. Give us a lift, that's a good fellow; I heard that you were safe landed here. There, gently, Ben—I almost wish I had been one of those priests we used to see at Malta, who made more use of their knees than they did of their feet; but I can tell you it is hard work to weigh now, so I'm coming to an anchor in my own cabin."

CHAPTER IV.

So in Misfortune's school grown tough,
In this same sort of knowledge,
Thinking mayhap, I'd not enough,
They sent me here to college ;

And here we tell old tales and smoke,
And laugh, while we are drinking ;
Sailors, you know, will have their joke,
Even though the ship were sinking.

DIBDIN.

TOM had not lost any of his fun or of his spirit, and every now and then, when his eye blazed up, I had no doubt in my own mind that in a little time he would be able to spin out his yarn as well as the best. I got my old nurse, my wife, to look after him ; for time had made her accustomed to her work, and knowing old Tom was a friend of mine through life, she looked after him kindly. When Tom was not in pain, he used to have his legs clapped on

a stool, and wonder how any man could wear his own, when he never could get wet feet, and wanted no shoes or stockings. Tom had fitted up his cabin with a print of the Royal Sovereign, and he hung his Trafalgar medal up, and kept it as polished and as bright as a marine does the buttons of his best jacket. But my old messmate was not clear of the coffin-maker yet, and any fall would have placed the D. D.* on the books against his name. Even Tom himself, who did not fear death any more than a lad who picks plums out of rum in a blaze, once or twice began to think that he was unmoored, and his anchor at a short stay-peak. By degrees, however, he got better, and as he found his spirits restored, so he began, according to his own plan through life, to replenish them. Tom was always a right good one at a glass of grog, and now when old and more than half gone, for he had both legs in the grave, when he could balance himself so as to walk with only the assistance of his crutches,

* Discharged, dead; the usual way, on board a man-of-war, of writing a man's epitaph.

he pegged away to the Dolphin, and there blew his cloud and drank his grog regardless of any consequences.

I felt as if I was young again when I saw old Tom;—all the former scenes in the Mediterranean when we were on board the Agamemnon used to rise up before me, and often and often did we spin our yarns over and over again.

“ Well, Tom,” said I to him one day, “ you have never given me a sketch of what became of you after your marriage : your wife married the soldier, you know, and left you before she got the allotment ; at that time I was up in London about Nelson’s funeral and getting Greenwich, and I have lost sight of you ever since.”

“ And no wonder, Ben,” he replied ; “ you don’t see half as much as you used to see : but I’ll tell you. After the Sovereign was paid off, I took a cruise to London myself, and all the money I got from Moses’ allowance for the Trafalgar prize-money and my pay at the back of it, soon got into other pockets. I first

of all went to Portsmouth to see if I could find my wife, and I steered away to the Jolly Sailors. The old landlord was at home, and I sat down and blew a cloud with him. ‘Well,’ said I, ‘old boy, have you seen my wife?’

“ ‘Your wife!’ said he; ‘why, to be sure I did; I saw her after she married the lobster. They started off for Ireland, where his regiment was quartered, and neither of them have been back since. To be sure, it’s not more than a month ago altogether, and I don’t well see, if they got across the water, how they could have been back.’

“ ‘In course,’ says I, ‘she was married under a purser’s name.’

“ ‘Not she,’ said the landlord. ‘Her name was Elizabeth Susan Matson; she married you as Betsy Matson, and she married the soldier as Susan Matson. The clerk swore he knew her again, although she had changed her colours, for this time she wore red ribbons: she answered that she was Betsy’s twin-sister, and as much like as two peas. This silenced the clerk, and they were married.’

“This settled all I had to know ; and although I did still love Betsy, yet I could not forgive her exactly, so I got drunk and forgot her. The next day I shipped myself on board a stage-coach, and back I went to Tower Hill. It was not long before I had been hauled up before the mayor, locked up in the lock-house, run aboard of by land pirates, and cleaned out, with store-room brushed, and not a shot in the locker : I had, therefore, nothing for it but to volunteer again ; and before a fortnight was over my head I was a quartermaster on board the *Arethusa*, commanded by Captain Charles Brisbane, as gallant an officer as ever led his ship into an enemy’s harbour or caught hold of a Frenchman at sea. We were off to the West Indies ; and although, Ben, I had been burnt there once before, I’m blessed if I don’t think it gets hotter and hotter, until one of these days I expect to hear that Jamaica is all in a blaze, and the black fellows burning like tallow-candles.

“As far as Yellow Jack was concerned, we got off pretty well ; he took his proportion,

for he's never asleep; and when we got ashore at Barbadoes on the watering-party, some of us went about a week afterwards much farther under the water than ever we expected. Well, that yellow fever is the devil himself.

“We had not long been there,—I mean in Jamaica, (I'll just run my log up, Ben, before we get back to our cabins,)—when we were joined by the *Latona*, and *Anson*, and put to sea in company with them. We were beating up towards the island of *Curaçoa*, when we fell in with the *Fisgard*, and she hauled her wind and joined the squadron.

“Towards the close of the year—and we had made a merry Christmas of it—we began fore and aft the decks to think something was in the wind. Although we were always kept pretty sharp at our work, yet now we fancied that we were practised at quarters more than at reefing topsails; and whenever the captains of the other ships came on board, they always got talking together more earnestly; and then it would be ‘Quarters again’—then ‘Carry all sail’—then it would be ‘Quarter-master, the glass;’

and after a good look, 'Tack ship, stand off under all sail,' then 'Heave-to ;' 'Captains come on board to supper ;' lots of talking again. And although it was Christmas time, it was as sure as that sugar grows in Jamaica that we should get something more than sugar-plums to eat before a week was over our heads.

"Well, Ben, the last day of the old year we had got off Curaçoa, and we got talking over old times, when the usual beat to quarters took place, men were mustered, the 'All sober and present' reported,—for I stood at the wheel and saw and heard it all,—when, instead of saying as we expected, 'Beat the retreat, and let the men make merry to-night,' or 'Splice the main brace,' or any such good news, the captain called out, 'Clear for action, and let the carpenters see the fire-screens in order. Send the gunner here.' Old Pounce came along the deck thinking something was wrong ; but the captain asked him how much powder he had filled, spoke about going to the magazine, and so on ; and when everything was ready, he went round the decks himself, and says he, 'My men,

you will have pretty tight work of it before this time to-morrow.' Then came the retreat, leaving the ship clear for action, and the guns secured by the tackles alone. 'Pipe the hammocks down,' said the captain, 'and don't disturb the men during the night more than is absolutely requisite.' It was then very light breezes and fine weather; the land, just as the sun went down was reported from the mast-head, and the squadron were seen standing towards it.

"Well, the devil an enemy did we see; and we couldn't make out what we were going to fight; for there was nothing but the island, the water, and the sky in sight; and we had never heard of anything but one or two Dutch ships in Curaçoa, and they were not very likely to start. But the captain soon cleared up our doubts, for before we had time to hang up our hammocks, the hands were turned up and sent aft.

"'My men,' said Brisbane, 'I expect that to-night the inhabitants of the island of Curaçoa will drink the old year out and the new

year in ; and, by the blessing of Providence, they will get more strange ships in their harbour than they bargain for just now. To-morrow morning, at daylight, if the breeze freshens, I shall be at anchor inside that harbour ; and before eight o'clock the island will be ours. I shan't say anything to you, my lads, about your duty ; you know pretty well what sailors can do, and I know that I can rely upon you.—The marines must be all ready to land in an instant,' he said, addressing the marine officer, 'and they will be in garrison by nine,' he remarked with a smile. 'Pipe down !'

“ We all, as if the boatswain's mate had whistled the warning at our ears, gave three hearty cheers, and each ship of the squadron repeated it. In course, we got talking about this on the forecastle, and some of the men who had seen the place said, 'I know the entrance is only fifty yards wide ; and there's a place there called Fort Amsterdam, which has sixty-six barkers, all shoving their heads out, like chickens in a coop when the butcher feeds

them. Then there's the squadron, and Fort Republic, which can blaze grape over every blessed inch of the harbour.'

" 'Is that all?' said another chap: 'why, it's not half enough. And what of the narrow harbour?—the less way the jollies will have to go before they tow a line ashore.'

" 'Well,' said the boatswain's mate, as he came forward, 'I expect to be made boatswain of the theatre, and pipe the curtain up: this will be a rare go, surely.'

" 'Come, my lads,' said the officer of the watch, 'get as much sleep as you can, and we shall have time enough to talk about the theatre to-morrow.'

"About four o'clock in the morning, when the watch was relieved, the hammocks were stowed without any 'piping up,' the land was close on board of us, the other ships all in line, and the captain on deck. He was looking out with the master for the entrance of the harbour; and this bothered him a little, until just at day-break, when we made it out clear enough. 'Make sail!' was the order; and in a jiffy

every sail was set, and we standing right into a hole in the island, which looked about as broad as from Sally Port to Gosport.

“ If the Dutchmen had been bousing their jibs up or not I can’t say, but we soon began to think the captain was right, and that they had taken so much schnaps the night before that they couldn’t open their eyes, or that when they did they saw double, for they never began to fire, although our jib-boom seemed poking the officer out of his bed. There we were, only four of us, going into this place, spanking along at a fine rate; and from the look of the entrance we all thought the captain was going to run us on shore to take the barnacles off the ship’s bottom. Whilst we were wool-gathering about this, we saw a Dutch frigate, the *Hatslar*, a sloop, the *Surinam*, and two large schooners, moored across the narrow entrance. It was then getting on to good daylight. We shortened sail, and ran smack on board the frigate: she was boarded and taken before the first lieutenant knew what was the reason of the row. The Jollies were whipped ashore, and in spite of

the most cursed fire of grape, canister, and round-shot, they hopped about like tumblers at a fair, jumped into Fort Amsterdam, and by seven o'clock frigates and fort had an English jack on board of them.

“ I don't know, Ben, who were the most surprised, we or the Dutchmen : to think we ever should get into such a hole without being sunk, and to find that by ten o'clock, four hours after we had opened our fire, our flag was flying upon Fort Republic, and the whole island, with ships, shipping, batteries, Dutchmen, coffee, and cocoa-nuts, were ours ! So blind drunk must these fellows have been, that they only killed three men, and wounded eleven.

“ That was my first caper after Trafalgar.”

CHAPTER V.

A sailor's narrative resembles a ship's course in working to windward, which is fain to yield obliquely to the blast in order to weather her object indirectly, and fetch her port in the end.

CAPT. GLASCOCK.

“It's blowing great guns and small arms at sea now,” said I to Tom the next day, “and I'm blessed if I don't think we are just as snug in this good-looking receiving-ship, Greenwich Hospital, as if we were bobbing about like a fisherman's float in the Bay of Biscay; and considering you might stir any fire in England with your feet without burning your toes, I think, old boy, you would find it easier to stump to the Dolphin than scud up the rigging.”

“Maybe,” replied Tom; “and I think, Ben,” said he, “you would find it with your

one fin easier to drink to the health of our Sailor King, than to turn in a dead-eye."

"That's personal," said I; "and, like your betters, Tom, you don't see more with your two top-lights than I do with my one. However, I should have no objection to turn in anything else but another *dead-eye*. Although you have no regular service legs, yet, for a pair of dock-yard pins, they are as good as any carpenter's yeoman could rummage from the store-room: and as *good*, the parson says, comes out of evil, so you never need cut your corns or buy any blacking to polish your shoes."

"That's what I call *fortune de guerre*, as the Frenchman used to say," replied Tom, "when he made a mistake, and, instead of getting into Brest or Toulon, used to be out of his reckoning, and by some devilish bad fortune find himself snugly housed not a score of miles from Portsmouth. But come along, Ben Brace, my old Polyphemus; and, as you will have your blind eye to windward, I'll keep to leeward of you, or you'll make so much lee-way you'll never fetch the port.—There, starboard

you may a bit, and we shall get out of harbour here without running foul of the gates."

"Much obliged for the pilotage, Tom," I replied; "but as I sail better than you, I'll take you in tow; and, if it was not personal, I should say, seeing that I remark all things, that you would be like a small craft astern of a vessel which had lost its rudder: you would have to look out and steer her, whilst she towed you along. There, I'm smack in the gutter; that all comes without being personal like—of your not considering that I *can* wet *my* feet."

"*Fortune de guerre*," said Tom, as he was passing along a slippery part of the quay; up went both legs, and he was making a stern board, as he slid down the inclined plane, his timber toes sticking out like the catheads of a ship, his cocked-hat swimming away like a Portuguese man-of-war, and he himself never stopping until he was fairly launched. A crowd of watermen soon restored the old boy to his equilibrium. I once more took him in tow, we fetched the tap, and were very shortly as comfortably employed in smoking as the most

arrant tobacconist could ever have wished to see us.

“Tom,” said I, “that taking of Curaçoa was a gallant affair: for it’s not every man who will run into a harbour bristling with guns and stocked with soldiers and sailors. How many had you?”

“How many?” said Tom; “why, we did not muster altogether more than seven hundred and fifty: they might have eaten us, and no trouble either.”

“Well, where did you steer to after that, Tom?”

“Steer to!” said Tom; “why, we steered about the West Indies and home again, and so on until 1809, when I was drafted on board the *Bucephalus*, and went to Flushing. We did not make much of that, although it was much harder work than Curaçoa.

“I don’t know how it is, old shipmate,” he continued, “but we sailors never get on so well when we have to act in conjunction with the soldiers: either the ships get there before the time, or the soldiers are beat before we come

up ; and I think the best plan is always to have it to ourselves ; then, if we are touched up roughly, why, we slip our cables, loose sails, and they may blaze away until they are blind : but when it comes to covering retreats, as they call it, why we are sure to botch the business. I never shall forget some of our lads afterwards in America being shoved ashore with a musket to march with the soldiers, and when a herd of swine hove in sight, didn't we fire at them—that's all, and chase them till we heard, ' Halt ! halt ! ' but we never came to a heave-to until we had got a string-halt on the pigs' hind-legs, and then we moored the whole fleet of them, with a cable each way ; and after all, they were the best prisoners we made.

“ But I'm all adrift with Flushing, and certainly know little enough about it ; for, with the exception of firing at a low town with rockets and shells, and running in and out of shoals—aground one moment and afloat the next—it's very little we did, and the soldiers did no more. But Lord, Ben ! how they did die ! Sheep with the rot was a joke to them !

They went off worse than at Jamaica in the sickly season! not all the Skeedam, or the schnaps of Beverland could save them; and a pretty bother there 'll be amongst them at the last pipe! Ay, Ben, it's often, since two of my stumps have been bowled down, as a saucy chap said the other day, that I have taken to thinking about the last launch; and if I could be shoved overboard in a hammock, in three or four hundred fathom water, after I'm dead, I should like it better than getting a kick from one or a cuff from another in the church-yard. Who knows but what a left-handed boatswain's-mate might be alongside of us to freshen our way aloft?"

"Well, talking's dry work; and this is the first time I have ever come to an anchor in the Dolphin; and although I swore never to have any more grog for a fortnight, yet I think I must treat resolution to a glass, and my promise to a pipe. Here! hulloa! ship ahoy!"

Old Jorum the landlord freshened hawse for Tom; who, when he had got his pipe in his mouth and his grog before him, looked like a

real pensioner, who had left his legs and his cares behind him, began to talk of past days, and it was some time before I got him on the right tack to finish his sea-service before he ran ashore for ever. He was always laying his anchors out to windward, and after he had asked after the little Jorums, he wore ship.

“ I say, Jorum,” he began, “ I suppose you know that eighteen-pence a week wouldn’t pay you if I keep treating resolution and promise to a pipe and a glass, so I should like to understand how long my score may be before you clap a stopper upon it.”

“ Why, Mr. Toprail,” said Jorum, “ these are hard times ; and although we have peace and plenty, I think it ought to be called peace and poverty ; so that one ’s obliged to turn his money every new moon for luck, and take as much of it as one can get from a customer ; but with you, who have so often danced at my old place at Plymouth, and spent your prize-money like a sailor, why, I shan’t be hard with you ; and now I think of it, I’ll make this agreement with you, to give you a glass every

Saturday night, providing you get me a peep at the bullet which killed Lord Nelson."

"Why, Jorum," said Tom, "you might as well ask for the beak of one of the seven great geese that eat the grass off Solomon's grave, or the tail of the donkey that carried the Brazilian officer, when some sailors caught hold of both of them at Rio Janeiro, clapped them in the launch, and had them hoisted on board instead of a water-cask."

Jorum turned round, and I said to Tom, "Clench him, Tom! I know all about it."

"Well, that's a bargain," said Tom; "and give us your hand upon it, old fellow." That was done, and Tom went on with his yarn.

"From the *Bucephalus* I was drafted into the *Boyne*, and went to the Mediterranean; then we got to the old place, blockading Cape Secie, and looking out for another Trafalgar: ay, and if we could have got them out far enough to smell salt-water, that Sir Peter Parker, in the *Menelaus* frigate, would have given them a little trouble, just to keep them employed until we could get alongside."

“ That was a fleet, Ben ! I have seen them both—I saw and served in them both. Nelson’s was a good one ; but Pellew’s was a better. The ships were in better order : and I don’t think since ships were built and admirals wore cocked-hats, a smarter officer ever trod a deck than Sir Edward Pellew. It’s very little we did, Ben, out there, but look at them ; and they were quite satisfied at seeing us from their harbour. They never attempted to make a fight of it, although sometimes they might have eaten us. Out they would come, stand off shore, looking as brave as a bull-dog ; but directly Sir Edward got sail upon the Caledonia, and the in-shore squadron edged down to smell their powder, it was tack ship, and in they went again. I think, in 1813, I remember counting over the low land by Cape Sepet twenty-two sail of the line, and amongst them six three-deckers, all a-taunto, with top-gallant yards across, ready for sea, colours flying ; and yet they never exchanged a shot with any of us but once, and that was very much against their intentions.

“The Menelaus was always barking at them ; but what could a frigate do ? At last we thought we were in for a brush, and we got to quarters, intending to show them, that although they had killed one Nelson, yet another was alive. We had been kept so long without a real fight, that not half the men remembered how a shot whizzed.

“It was gunpowder-day,—I never knew, Ben, why it was called so, for we never had any great action that I heard of on the 5th of November,—the Frenchmen came out for an exercise ; we were all of us well off the land, and therefore they got out into salt-water, in order to tack, and wear, and reef, and be sick. Out they came, all sail set. Any one would have supposed that they were going to see how many of us would look pretty in Toulon harbour ; for they had got a fair wind back again from the east-south-east, and they showed their colours like good men and true. We were away to the southward, hardly in sight ; but we soon knew what was going on, for our advanced squadron of four sail of the line

made the signal that the enemy were coming out. We had had that so often that it made no stir amongst us, and the admiral never turned his hands up to make sail ; but he quietly set his top-gallant sails and main-sail, and the fleet followed the motion. Just at this time the wind suddenly chopped round to the south-west, and the French harbour was now to windward of their fleet. Directly this was seen, there was a stir to some purpose : the in-shore squadron cracked on, and we—for we kept the wind from the east-south-east—were not behind in making sail.

“ It began to look pretty enough ; for four of the French line were at some distance from the rest of their fleet, and our advance made a slap at them. In the mean time they were working back as hard as they could, and we were coming up with a fair wind, and so it continued until we were within shot, when the wind headed us, and we paid off, and tried to pay them off too, for the *Caledonia* opened her broadside on a large three-decker.

“ The firing seemed to make us all jump

sky-high, and we carried on in the hopes of a general action. Sir Edward Pellew had smelt the powder, and he was not going to give it up without trying its strength. But there was always some good luck for those Frenchmen. They had so much the advantage of flaws of wind, and were so well protected by the batteries, that although eleven shot struck the *Caledonia*, and she was close enough in-shore to have asked the officer of the battery to dinner, the fleet got in, and we went off. That, Ben—that was the only time Sir Edward got a shot at a three-decker. He got one broadside afterwards at an eighty-gun ship we had managed in the Boyne to separate from the main body; but she got into Toulon with only one or two shots in her side and eighteen in her stern.

“This was our work,” Tom continued; “and between that and refitting at Mahon, and sometimes running over to Genoa, we got through the years until the peace came, and Bony was shoved ashore at Elba to get a good night’s sleep, and give us another chance of a penn’orth of steps at Portsmouth. But before

we got to Old England again, we went down among the Barbary boys, and had the admiral's flag on board of us. If they had not done just what the admiral liked, which was to pay us some dollars and send some slaves away, we would have made such a noise in the bay of Algiers that fish would have been dear in the market. Well, that was done ; home we came ; and, as usual with all stationers, went to Portsmouth.

“ ‘ Well, Tom,’ said I to myself, ‘ here you are all safe after the war, with a grisly head and a petty officer's rating ; and now you may just ship a broom under your arm and sweep a crossing, or volunteer and be refused by the captain of a collier. What am I to do,’ thinks I, ‘ on half-pay ?—nothing a day and feed yourself, won't do. And now, although I've grumbled occasionally about a piece of pork being bad, and the beef being made out of a salted horse ; yet I'm thinking that when the pay is gone, ship's allowance will be better than monkey's—more kicks than halfpence.’

“ Well, I turned all this end for end in the

cable-tier of my mind, and I did not like it. I was getting old in the service, but I had not a friend left in the world. I had done my duty like a man, and I had been as often in action as any man in the fleet; but what was that? I had not a shot in my hull, and my spars were all safe and strong. I knew that if I went to volunteer for a ship on the peace-establishment, the first lieutenant would have turned round upon his heel, never have looked at my certificates, but would say, ‘Very likely, my fine fellow; you may have been with Nelson, Collingwood, and Exmouth—(for they had made a Lord of Sir Edward Pellew)—but we want young active men. Here, Mr. Jonas, see this old fellow out of the ship.’—Then, if I had gone to a West Indiaman, the skipper would have said, ‘No, my lad, I can’t take you. Men-of-war’s men always want grog, and they don’t like working all day and night.’ In short, Ben, I began to think, that let a man serve his country as truly as he would serve himself—and I take that to be pretty staunchly—if he escaped the shot of the French or the knife of

the Spaniard, he might have all the pleasure of dying by starvation in the streets. What can an old sailor turn his hand to?

“ I had all this before me. I was never an idler; and although rather wild at Portsmouth was tame aboard. We were to be paid off; the pay-books were made up, and Tom Toprail likely to turn fisherman's boy in his old age, when one morning, just before we were to be sent adrift, whom should we see coming alongside but the admiral. He used to play these tricks in Port Mahon: and no skipper knew that he might not be roused out of his cot at daylight to find the commander-in-chief looking on at the holy-stoning of the decks. Well, Brace, no sooner does his lordship come aboard, than the boatswain and his mates were at work to turn the hands up, and aft we all came on the quarter-deck. The officers were all in attendance, and we did not know if the gratings were going to be rigged, or the admiral going to preach.

“ ‘ My lads,’ said he, ‘ the fewer words I use, the better you will understand me. We have

sailed together some time, and we are pretty well acquainted with one another. Here is a letter from the Admiralty, desiring me to fit out a squadron for very particular service in the Mediterranean,—that kind of service which you all like ;—in short, it is to attack Algiers. Now you all know you are ordered to be paid off, who amongst you will volunteer to serve under your old commander-in-chief, and enter on board the Queen Charlotte ?

“ You know, Ben, when an admiral speaks Jack is always silent ; and it ’s a long time before he gets his jawing-tacks on board. Well, there was one fellow turning his hat round as if he expected to find Spanish dollars in the rim ; another was flattening his hair down and looking as if he was shipping the winch of his lungs to get a word up ; and a third was shuffling his feet about, as if he was getting ready to dance a hornpipe ; but not a man spoke a word,—they all stood, like a flock of sheep in a squall, huddled together and keeping close to each other.

“ ‘ What ! not one ? ’ said his lordship : ‘ is

there not a man in the Boyne who will sail with me ?’

“ ‘ I’ll enter, my lord,’ said I ; ‘ but I should like a day or two’s liberty to get rid of my money ; and then I’d go round the world with your lordship.’

“ ‘ That’s well spoken, Toprail,’ said the admiral, (for he was not the one to get on board a ship and not know his crew ;) ‘ you shall have your present rating ; and I hope that in twenty-four hours you will have spent all you ought to spend, and appear on board the Queen Charlotte.—Is there no one else ?’

“ About a hundred spoke at once : it was all to the same end as my say ; we wanted to hear old Scrapehard’s fiddle again, to have one good double-shuffle and cut, and take the sand off the lower-deck of our shoes ; to go to the theatre, and take Poll, and Susan, and Jane, and Betsy a cruise in a coach, and then we were ready for Turk, or Frenchman, or any other set of fellows in the world, whether they wore hats or turbans.

“ ‘ Ah !’ said his lordship, ‘ I thought you

only required one to break the ice ; that 's all as it should be. You want a run on shore, and you can have it : but remember, the good men who come first will have the best ratings.—Pipe down, Mr. Calls !

“ The next day we were paid off, and the Israelites were on the look-out for us : but they were not half so bad as a new set of chaps, who had set up a kind of coast-guard on the grog-shops, as if we were smugglers, and wanted overhauling. They came on board first, about six of them, all dressed in black, calling themselves Methody parsons ; and Lord love them, Ben ! what do you think they wanted ?—why, for us to hand over our pay to them, and to go to church instead of going to the Jolly Sailors. They turned up their sanctified eyes, and told us they had a regard for our souls ; and that the devil was a bad spirit, and was in the Jolly Sailors, and such places.

“ ‘ I takes the liberty,’ said Jack Henderson, ‘ to say to you that you don’t speak Gospel. Man and boy these last twenty years, whenever I’ve been at Portsmouth, I’ve been drunk

at the Sailors ; and there 's not a drop of bad spirit in the house. And now, what have you got to say to that ?'

“ ‘ My good man,’ said one of them, ‘ if you give us your money we will take care of it for you, keep you sober, save your soul, and make you a better man.’

“ ‘ Well,’ said Jack, ‘ that ’s all fair for the payment. But come down below, for I don’t want these chaps to see me strike my colours, without firing a shot.’ I knew Jack was up to some rig, so I claps myself on the combings of the main hatchway, and listened. Jack got the parson into the cockpit, and then asked him to go along the wings, as his chest was forward ; and away goes Jack straight a-head in the dark. He knew, and he saw — for he was used to the light below—that one of the gratings was up : in course, he jumps across to the other, and says he, ‘ Take care, your reverend worship, how you comes along ; take care of the hold, it ’s all clear as the boatswain’s storeroom.’ Well, the poor fellow goes groping along, and holding on by the knees, when he

comes to the place where Jack had leaped over, and down he goes smack into the hold. Jack hears the noise, and calls out, ‘Where are you, your honour’s worship’s reverence?’

“‘Oh, oh! I’m sorely bruised, and my spirit waxeth faint!’ said the poor fellow: ‘I have fallen into the pit.’

“‘Why, I’m blessed,’ said Jack, ‘if his honour’s reverence hasn’t tumbled down the hold! Oh, my eyes and limbs! how shall I get him out again?—there’s not a rope in the ship, and we have no Jacob’s ladder left!’

“‘Jacob’s ladder was a vision—a dream,’ said the Methody parson, (for he was not hurt much, more’s the wonder; for if the devil hadn’t taken care of his own, he would have broken his neck.) ‘Oh, release me, my good man:—why did you deceive me?’

“‘Didn’t I tell you,’ said Jack, ‘to mind the hold, for it was as clear as the boatswain’s storeroom? Now I won’t deceive you this time, and you may get out how you can, for I’m blessed if I lend you a hand; and if you can reach from the kelson to the lower part of the

hatchway, you must be as long and as straight as old Domet, who used to stand on the break of the poop and whisper into the main-top. Good-b'ye to your honour's worship's reverence! I'm off to the Jolly Sailors, and I'll just tell your brothers that you are in a sad state, and tumbled into the pit, as you call the hold, you lubberly rascal !'

“Up comes Jack, and he goes to another, who was preaching away by the hour—one would suppose he had swallowed a gale of wind, and did not want breath for a year; it was all about grog, and drunkenness, when Jack whips his oar in.

“‘Hulloa, old straight hair and black buttons! what's the use of your tossing up your eyes, like a` dying cod-fish, about grog, when there's one of your crew so drunk that he's fallen down into the hold, and he's singing out like a good one just now—Listen, my old boy!’

“The parson clapped a stopper on his tongue, and whipped out the hawse-plug of his ear, and sure enough he hears his friend down

below roaring like a bull, and talking about ladders, and Jacob, and spirits; so what does he do but call the rest of them, and they got down below as far as they knew the way, and then perched themselves upon the combing like so many crows. Jack wanted to get some more into the scrape, but the poor fellow below called out to them not to follow the deceiver; upon which Jack tops his boom, jumps on deck, and getting his shipmates away, left the parsons to assist one another.

“ ‘ You ’re a pretty set of fellows to take care of sailors on shore and can’t get out of the ship’s hold ! ’ said Jack. ‘ You ’re down in the spirit-room, old fellow,’ he continued; ‘ but all you drink won’t hurt your eyesight.’ And away we all went, giving three cheers as we shoved off; and we had a regular spree.

“ The admiral was quite right: in four-and-twenty hours I hadn’t enough money to buy a quid of tobacco; so I got a boat, and away I went on board the Queen Charlotte. In about three days I was amongst almost all my old shipmates.

“Jack met the parson on shore, but he sheered off when Jack hailed him across the street and asked, ‘If he was not a pretty considerable humbug of a parson to go aboard a ship and try to pocket the pay of the men, and then get drunk and fall down the hatchway!’

“Well, Ben, I’ve often thought that that was the most impertinent thing I ever remember;—to think that we lads, who sailed round the world, knew every corner where a grog-shop stood, and thrashed every nation that ever wore a flag, should be treated like a set of dogs, and only given so many halfpence, for fear we should get sick in the bunshop. These Methody fellows caught some of the comical; but they didn’t make much of a haul with us. Who knew if they weren’t lawyers under false colours? at any rate, the black flag was not likely to tempt us. I believe every one of them who are such sanctified fellows that they won’t let a sailor have a glass, and want to keep his money, are nothing more or less than a set of pirates; and after they had plundered the ship, they would

scuttle the hull, and send you to blazes in a moment. No, no ; let's have it all in the regular way : let's have the chaplain to preach, and the captain to read the articles of war ; give us our grog, and touch up the man who skulks ; then I'm much mistaken if we don't beat all the world, as we have done before. But to make sailors, Ben, a tea-drinking set of Chinese, and to cram them with Methody, is altering the man as much as they altered the old ones when they cut off their tails !”

“ Cut off what ?” said I, for I thought Tom was running his rig upon me, “ cut off a sailor's tail ! What, do they want to make them like shepherd's dogs, and have their hair cut round a skimming-dish like a Malay's head ? What, Tom, give them only half allowance of grog, and turn their spirit-rooms into tea-chests, like the hold of an Indiaman ? No, no, Tom ; I'm like the old woman who believed the mountains of sugar and seas of milk, but wouldn't believe the flying-fish ; and I'm blessed if I believe you.”

CHAPTER VI.

I knows all about it, you see, for I was quartered on the poop at the signals. Well, down we runs; when the admiral, both ways bent for a belly-full, makes the general signal for dinner,—and many's the brave fellow that never bolted another. But 'twas no time to be nice in stowing away ground-tier grub—so you may suppose every man was at his gun in a crack.—*Naval Sketch Book.*

“WE were not long in harbour. Directly it was known that we were going out to fight, and not to be stuck in Malta or Gibraltar, eating figs and exchanging biscuit for sausages, plenty of the right sort—men who had been half their lives working guns—volunteered; and before the 25th of July, on which day we left Portsmouth, five sail of the line, (in which were the Queen Charlotte and the Impregnable,) three frigates of the large sort, and two of the small ones, five gun-brigs, and four bomb-ves-

sels, were manned and ready for sea. There was no necessity, Ben, for the press-gang : only let your real tar know that he is not going to sea to do nothing, but that the old work is to be done over again, and you may catch as many of them as would man all the ships in the navy. I never saw men come on board more determined to have prize-money : some of them, to be sure, had already been in action on shore, and mustered the first Sunday with a dark dab about both eyes ; but they left their pay and their prize-money behind them. I'm told that half the captains and lieutenants in the navy volunteered, and that you might have manned a frigate with officers ; they couldn't go in only five large ships, unless they went as captain of the guns.

“ On the 28th we started from Plymouth and stood down the Channel ; and from that time, when we fished the anchor, until we anchored at Algiers, we had not many hours to look after our clothes-bag. There we were, directly we had swallowed our cocoa, hard at practice with the guns. There was a twelve-pounder cast

adrift on the quarter-deck, and a large target stuck from the fore-topmast studding boom, and we had to blaze away at that. Of course, when the ship rolled, the target rolled ; and for a week I would have bet my half allowance of grog against a marine's powder-belt, that the target was as safe as a man in irons.

“ At last Joe Miller hit it. I think he shut his eyes when he fired ; but he was patted on the back, and they gave him a glass of grog : and when the other first and second captains of the guns saw that, if they made a hole in the rope yarns, it let rum out of the bottle, they began to be more cautious, and before we got to Gibraltar, I wouldn't have swung in the target for all the prize-money of the galleons. I've seen fourteen bottles broke in the course of the morning's exercise — and the bottle was the bull's-eye : it was as much as to say, ‘ smash me and the liquor will run out.’ Besides this regular noise, we had two days in the week to blaze away powder ; and I'm sure that the Dey of Algiers, as they call the great Turk there,

must have known exactly how far off we were, from the difference of the sound.

“Well, Ben, after making as much sail as the ships could carry, and after blazing away as much powder as would have served for the battle of St. Vincent, we came in sight of the rock, and dropped our anchors. Lots of rock scorpions were alongside in a moment, and we had a blow-out of grapes for a piastre, enough for twelve in a mess. But we were not to eat and do nothing; we had to complete the water and provisions, and we made up our powder—for stone walls take a deal of battering, and we had seen the batteries before, and knew that it would be hot work and no favour. There were five frigates and a corvette, all Dutchmen, under an Admiral Mynheer Capellan, who joined our squadron; and those lads talked of nothing but schnaps and Turks from the time we anchored until we sailed.

“On the 14th we sailed, Dutchmen in co. and in right good order they were: they did not look quite so light aloft as we did, and

when we came to reef topsails ours were generally at the mast-head before they had got the weather earring out or a point tied ; but they stuck close to us, and from the exercise they were at, you would have thought old Van Tromp had jumped up again, and was going to work after his old fashion.

“ On the 16th the *Prometheus* joined the fleet. She was come straight from Algiers, and although it was not often in men-of-war’s boats that any of the men came on board an admiral’s ship, yet the midshipman who came with Captain Dashwood just jumped up for a minute and then jumped down in the cockpit, and then up jumps the stroke-oar’s man, and we began to pick his brains for knowledge and his memory for news.

“ ‘ Sharp work, lads, we shall have of it,’ says he. ‘ Every blessed morning, noon, and night, are the donkeys and the slaves carrying sand to make batteries ; and they walk guns about as easily as we used to carry a coil of rope in Portsmouth dock-yard, when the officer of the party and Whistle the boatswain

did not like it to be rolled. They know we are coming; they march the men into the batteries every morning, and there you see rammers and sponges turning about like a chap with two swords for a dog-vane. For the last twenty-four hours we never met a Turk who was not loading his pistols or looking into the barrels: and the other day, when we tried to get off the Consul's family, having clapped a midshipman's rigging over their mast-heads, notwithstanding they were rather bluff about the bows—at least the wife and the grown daughter,—yet those Turks were so hard at work getting ready for action that they let them pass the gate, and did not know a woman from a man. I'm blessed if I didn't think that if any born creature ought to know a man from a woman, a Turk was the fellow! and yet they looked in their faces and let them pass.'

“ ‘Prometheus' boat!’ said the mid of the deck; but it was only to get ready, so on went the coxswain with his story.

“ ‘Our doctor was on shore to rig them out, and it was managed right well; all the cork-

screw locks were shoved under the hat, and they looked so like officers, that nobody had got the chair ready to hoist them in. Well, when the surgeon had got the mother and daughter in breeches, he gives the child, quite an infant, something to set it to sleep, and he claps it into a basket like you would a pig, and covers it up carefully, leaving the poor creature as much air as could come through the grating-work of the basket; and taking hold of it, he clapped some fruit over all, and walks down towards the boat, whistling ‘Oh the roast beef of Old England,’ and swinging the basket about like you would a cock to set it to sleep. You know, lads, the streets of Algiers are so narrow, that when a donkey with a cargo of sand comes sailing along you must screw up against the house and make yourself as flat as a pancake, or you might lose your storeroom altogether; and if seven or eight of them come along like a flock of wild geese one after the other, the stopping of the first one at the gate to see what he is laden with, brings all the rest in a heap, and Turk or Christian

couldn't get by. Well, it so happened that, what between a heap of donkeys, and the beating them, and the slaves who were endeavouring to pass, the doctor got jammed against the wall by a jackass. He did not care a straw about himself, because he knew he could set his victualling department right when he got on board: but the basket was another affair, and he kept it down under the donkey's belly, swinging it about as much as he could, and whistling the Roast Beef in sharp notes whenever the animal gave him a jam and sent the wind out of him. The Turks were laughing at the doctor, and spitting at him for a Christian: but he did not care much about that, and when they found he took it so quietly, they thought they would jam him more tightly against the wall, and make him stick there for a full due. So what does one of the Turks do, but out sword and give the donkey a touch in the stern that would have made even a pig forge ahead. Down went neddy's head, and up went his tail, and he began pitching about like a ten-gun brig in a head sea, working the doctor

into the wall ; when smack came a stick upon his crupper. He forged ahead fast enough then, and his hind legs gave the basket such a jog that the baby awoke, and set up a cry that might have been heard at the palace.

“ ‘ They seized the doctor and child instantly, and I had just time to get down to the boat and shove off with the mother and daughter. Ay, they might have found out then that they were women, for they piped their eyes and swabbed their faces, and called out for the boy and the basket ; but the devil a word did they say about either the fruit or the doctor, who by this time, I should think, is about getting back to his own shape again. Well, lads, what do you think the Dey does ? he sends for the child, and it was a toss up if he roasted and eat it, or pitched it into the harbour ; however, something went right at that time, and he sent the child on board ; but he has kept the doctor, the consul, and every body else he could find ashore. And Lord have mercy upon them all ! I wouldn’t be in their clothes for all the shag-tobacco in Vir-

ginia!—You couldn't give a chap a drop of water, could you? but perhaps your grog has been served out?

“I took the hint, Ben; but before I could wet his throat, down came the captain, the boat was off, and we under sail.

“On the 26th we made the land, and then we began to look about us in earnest. The admiral had made up his mind not to stand shilly shallying, and sending messages and getting no answers; for Turks are never in a hurry to talk, and when they have to write an answer, they take care to have time enough to mend their pens. As there was no secret in the matter, we all knew what we were going about just as well as the admiral. At daylight on the morning of the 27th, when I came to relieve the quartermaster of the middle watch, there was the place in sight, and looking for all the world like a large main-topsail spread out to dry on the side of a hill; narrow towards the head and broad at the foot; the reef-points standing for streets; whilst the walls, which we could see as plainly as we could see the lighthouse,

looked like the leach-ropes. It appeared nothing else, Ben, but fortification and big guns ! batteries south of the town, batteries north of the town, batteries over the town, and batteries under it. And then comes the pier and mole-head, which must have taken all the donkeys between Tetuan and Tunis to have carried the stone-work alone to have built them. We lay almost becalmed, with our heads towards the place, and as we looked through the haze of the morning, the town appeared larger, and the batteries bigger, than perhaps they really were ; but when I looked round at the squadron going to attack it, I thought that we must be blown out of the water, and that if any of us came down again with our arms and limbs, we should be jammed into our right shapes again by a donkey in the gateway.

“ I had been on shore often before at Algiers, and I knew the place as well as if I had carried the stones to build it ; for when I was there in the Boyne, getting water, I got leave from the midshipman, after the hose was fixed and the water running, just to step through the gate

and see what it was like. Well, there I saw houses jammed together, built of stone, with walls so thick that I thought one could make a defence for the other, and that nothing could hurt the second street after the first one was knocked down. Then I got into the Fish-market, and there was a battery, if well managed, strong enough to sink a three-decker; and when I walked round the Mole, I said to myself, 'I should like to see all the ships in the world come alongside of this, and let me have only three hundred blue-jackets, and the guns fitted with tackles,' (for I don't understand that handspiking them out, when one good haul, and out it would run to the wall.) Many's the time I looked into the coffee-shop and saw these chaps sitting cross-legged like tailors, with more pistols and swords than ever were used to cut out the Hermione; and then I used to imagine that these Turks thought of nothing but smoking and fighting. They were a fine stout set of fellows, and did not care for death any more than they did for their law against drinking grog. I've seen them turn it

down by quarts, and well they may. Did any man yet have a thing denied him and not wish for it? When there's no liberty to go on shore, don't we all wish to go directly? whereas, had the word been passed 'for those who wanted liberty to go on shore, to go aft on the quarter-deck and put their names down,' not thirty would have gone; and I heard the parson say one morning, when somebody had eaten *his* hot roll, that, 'like Adam with an apple, the roll never would have been touched if it had not been the property of another.' But this is all human nature, Ben. Fancy how we boys longed for soft-tack when the first lieutenant would not let the bum-boat come alongside: stop a man's grog, and he'll get drunk if he can.

“The time was near at hand when many a brave fellow, who was then asleep in his hammock, would be lashed up in it before the morrow, or launched overboard without it; and yet how quietly they slept!—ay, many of them dreaming of home and their wives and their babies, and such like encumbrance, which, by

the blessed aid of the soldier, I have been spared. It was a beautiful morning, and there was a stillness about us like the calm before the hurricane. There was the Impregnable, as steady as if she had been built out of the sea ; her sails were hanging dead down from the yards, not a breath of wind blew even the jib out for a second ; on board of her all seemed as quiet below as the wind aloft, yet before night two hundred of her crew were either dead or wounded. Now and then one or two gulls would come screaming up towards the ship to pick up what had been thrown over-board ; and then one might hear a pipe on board of one of the ships, just to break the silence. Somehow I felt quite happy when we began to slush the water about the decks, and I never liked the noise of a holy-stone so much as I did on that morning.

“ The admiral was up early, and he sent away a boat with a flag of truce ; but he knew well enough he would get a Turk’s answer,—which means, Ben, that the Great Turk would *think* about it ; and that’s as much as to say,

Don't bother us, we want coffee and pipes. Well, I watched the admiral,—for I have seen many of them when going into action. I had a good look at Collingwood at Trafalgar, as he walked the deck as quietly as a marine officer on a Sunday morning when he is full tog for muster. I saw Nelson at St. Vincent: he was not an admiral then, but his arms worked about just as much as the stump did afterwards:—and I saw Exmouth, before and during the battle of Algiers: he seemed more thoughtful than any of them; and well he might be, for there was he with those five ships—(I'll run over their names in a minute)—which were likely to be riddled before they anchored, or which might be so disabled as not to get to the stations which had long been chalked out for them. And even if we did get all right, anchor down and sails stopped aloft, who could look at those stone walls, and know how thick they were, and yet feel confident of success? And he who commanded us all, and who gave the word to fire, how could he look on at the double row of iron teeth peeping out bravely

from the portholes of the batteries, and not think that, close as we were to be, not one of them could be fired without carrying some execution along with it? He was thoughtful; and as he stood upon the poop overhauling the town through his glass, I thought to myself, 'I'm blessed if I would not sooner be Tom Toprail, and have only to look after No. One, than be Lord Exmouth, with all the fleet upon his mind!' One dwells on these things afterwards, Ben; but certain it was he thought, when he first volunteered for the business, that many a hat would be without a head, and for that reason he would not take one of his own family. They came crowding all sail to get a chance of being shot—for there's not a finer, braver set of men in the service than belong to that name. He was right. 'No! no!' said he; 'I have quite enough upon my hands and head, without having the anxiety of a son with me.'

"The Severn had got a slight cat's-paw of wind, and she towed the flag of truce some distance; but the wind deserting her, the boat

shoved off, and a long hot pull they had of it. We watched her as she came to a grapnel outside of the Mole, and waited for an answer to the letter, which a Turkish officer had carried on shore.

“ The breeze came down about two bells in the forenoon watch, and by the time we had got our pork and pease-soup stowed away, we were close to the land, and hove-to near enough to see the heads of the Turks’ pipes. There they were by thousands, Ben, sitting crossed-legs, with a lap full of arms and a mouth full of smoke, looking at us just as quietly as if we were some show got up by the Dey for the amusement of his subjects. But we soon altered the show. ‘ Well,’ thinks I to myself, although I said it out loud to Tom Simpson the signal-man, ‘ this is a pretty go ! This is what it is to be a Turk ! For do you mind, Tom,’ said I, ‘ these here fellows who clap canvass on their skulls because they’ve no hair, think that all the shot that ever was blazed since Adam was an oakum-boy in Chatham dock-yard, would never hit them unless they were wanted aloft !

If they are killed, why, it's all right! if they escape, it was all arranged it was to be so! And certain they feel, that if it's their time to answer muster to the general roll, although we may be bunglers enough to miss them, yet that some tile would tumble upon their skulls, or some powder blow up, or some catamaran capsize, for, somehow or other they were to go, and go they would! I wish I could think so,' I continued to Simpson, 'for my legs itch very much.'

" 'What!' said Simpson, 'not to run away, Tom?'

" 'No, no!' said I. 'Did Tom Toprail ever bob his head to a two-and-thirty-pounder yet? Handle your purser's-pump and look out, for here's the boat coming back.'

" It was a little after four bells P.M. as they write it on the log-board, — and which means, Ben, I believe, 'provisions munched,' as it begins after dinner,—that we saw the boat returning, and, as the admiral thought beforehand, without any answer. Up goes the signal, 'Are you ready?' and it was a hard matter to

say what ship answered first. The stops seemed to break all at the same moment, excepting on board the *Superb*, and the signal-man there was determined not to be last, so he sent the flag aloft without any stop at all.

“ ‘ Put the helm up, Mr. Gaze,’ said the admiral: and Mr. Gaze, who was the master, called out as quietly as if he was going to wear ship at sea, ‘ Up helm, quartermaster !’—‘ Ay, ay, sir !’ said I, and round flew the spokes.

“ The sails were trimmed, and each ship steered for her station. I was at the weather-wheel; and although I did think a bit, yet I never took my eye off the lighthouse, which Mr. Gaze told me to keep in a line with a flag-staff. ‘ Yes,’ said I to myself, ‘ here we go, right before the wind on a lee-shore, to see which is hardest, iron or stone, into a place not large enough to swing a decent-sized bum-boat; and if we are to get out again, we must haul her over the Mole-head;—for the breadth across was not more than three hundred and fifty feet, and how the devil were we to work a three-decker out of that horse-pond ?’

“ ‘ Starboard a little, Toprail !’ said the master.

“ ‘ Starboard it is, sir,’ said I.

“ ‘ We must anchor by the stern, Gaze,’ said the admiral.

“ ‘ Certainly, my lord !’ said the master ; not looking round the devil a point ; but continuing, ‘ Steady-i-e !’

“ ‘ Steady it is, sir !’ said I.

“ The wind was light, and we slipped along gently through the water. All hands were at quarters : the sail-trimmers stood ready to shorten sail, whilst the men on the lower deck were to attend to the cables. Well, Ben, as we got closer and closer, I expected a Turkish salute, for now the mole-head seemed coming on board of us. But no, there they were, sitting as I told you before, and not a blessed one of them was afraid of the flying jib-boom shoving them off the battery !

“ ‘ Shorten sail, Brisbane !’ said the admiral ; and everything was clewed up, and we went gently to our station.

“ ‘ Let go the anchor, Gaze !’ said his lordship.

“ ‘ Hold on for a moment !’ said the master with a louder voice. ‘ My lord, we must go a *little* farther in ;—now I think we are about right to rake the mole-head !’ Down went the anchor from the stern, a hawser was run out to a brig, and the jolly old Queen Charlotte lay like a duck on the water, with her starboard broadside ready to light the Turks’ pipes. I lashed the wheel, and jumped upon the poop to assist Simpson if any signals were to be made. ‘ And,’ says I, ‘ if those Turks understand English, they must think it odd that we come poking in here, right under their guns, and calling out the soundings as if we were going into one of our own harbours.’ Well, by way of letting them believe their ears if they doubted their eyes, we waited until we were all stoppered and snug, and then we gave them three such cheers as made the whole batch of them take their pipes out of their mouths, and they sent the smoke after the mouth-piece as coolly as I should have done at the Jolly Sailors.

“The admiral seemed to know what answer we should get to the cheer ; and as he did not want to hurt the smokers, he waved his hat, for he was on the poop, to the Turks, and kept saying, ‘Get out of the way, will you ? I ’m going to fire !’ But they looked at him with as much composure as a boatswain’s-mate looks at a man lashed to the gratings. ‘Stupid fellows !’ said the admiral, ‘*will* you get out of the way ?’ And he kept waving his hat with as large a sweep as a chap makes when he is mowing the governor’s grass.

“Just at this time, when the *Leander* was the only ship which had taken up her position besides ourselves, the silence was disturbed by a shot from the Lighthouse-battery, which came smack in amongst us.”

“‘Stand by !’ said the admiral. Two or three more followed the first, and as the fight was fairly begun by the Turks, he called out, after again waving to the people, who were close to the muzzles of the guns, ‘*Fire !*’ The whole broadside was blazed at the word, and no man was left on that pier-head who had not his

pipe put out. Close as we were, I could see distinctly the effect of our shot. The top of the mole-head seemed almost smashed ; but the smoke (for all the batteries opened their fire) soon clapped a stopper upon all observations in that quarter.

“ The Superb was the next ship to us, and she got all snug without much damage. The Minden was next to her ; then came the Albion, and last of all the Impregnable. These four line-of-battle ships were with their broadsides to the broadside of the Mole-battery ; whilst the Severn and the Glasgow were on our larboard quarter, astern of the Leander, which ship was abreast of the Fish-market, — for of course the Turks did not want any fish that day, they had to look out for their own souls !

“ I suppose, Ben, ever since Trafalgar, there never was so much noise made about a parcel of Turks. We saw them driven into the batteries like a set of donkeys ; and no sooner had a whole batch of them been blown to Jericho, than in comes a new set to fill up their places. In the mean time we were not

left to look at them in comfort. The whole contents of the inner part of the harbour seemed determined to have a crack at the admiral ; and once or twice I wished he had walked a little farther away from me. Every now and then we heard the bomb-vessels blazing away, and we saw the shells fall into the town and batteries, as exactly as a boy pitches a stone in a hat.

“ In the middle of all this smoke and noise, there was Mynheer Capellan coming into action with his frigates, and ranging up to his station, to the southward of the town, in a style which made the admiral say, ‘ Well done, Capellan ! Ah ! that ’s a brave nation, and right well do they uphold the character of their country ! ’ The Turks blazed away at them, for now they found out what asses they had been to let us anchor without annoyance ; but Mynheer and his broad-sterned crew took it all in good part until they anchored, and then they set to work to clear off the score ; and never yet did they stand to their guns better and act more coolly than they did at Algiers.

“ The Dutch admiral brought up astern of the Glasgow, and his squadron anchored astern of him. But, Ben, of all the gallant sights that ever I saw, I never did see anything to beat the courage and the coolness of Wise in the Granicus. The Hebrus and she were left to fill up any opening which might be made by some ship being unable, from the lightness of the wind, to reach her situation ; and there he remained out of fire, until he saw all the horses in their proper stables, and now he was to do just as he liked. Well, he never looked anywhere else, but smack in the hottest of the fire. He was not going to tail an end with the Dutchmen, or get half out of range by boxing about the bomb-vessels, so he drops his courses, sets his top-gallant sails, and steers smack for the admiral’s flag, which he saw above the smoke ; for he knew we were the closest in, and had got the warmest berth. He shortened sail all at once, ranges up between the Queen Charlotte and the Superb, and sets to work to make himself equal to a line-of-battle ship by blazing away faster than any ship in the fleet.

“ It has been the fashion ever since that business of the Seahorse and the Turkish frigates, to say, ‘ Oh! they are only Turks! what can they do?’ But I’ll tell you, Ben, what they tried to do. I’m blessed if they didn’t try in a parcel of crazy boats to board us in the smoke, and set fire to the Leander! Now that business of Hamilton’s and the Hermione, which is painted up in the hall, was a great thing: but what think you of a parcel of Turks—fellows in large trousers and turbans, and who hardly know an oar from a neckcloth—pulling up, catching crabs every moment, to board a three-decker? Why I suppose such impertinence was never known? We could have thrashed them with wet swabs, or left them to tumble overboard, by shutting the lower-deck ports and handing them some greasy ropes over the side. But to think even of such a thing! Well, poor fellows! they had not long to think what was coming next, for the Leander sent one broadside of round and grape in among them, and then if any man had wanted to fish he would have hooked a Turk.

They would have bit, poor fellows ! at any bait ; and if I could have saved some of them, it's not Tom Toprail who would have seen such gallant fellows made food for fishes.

“ We soon finished the Mole-head battery, and sprang the ship round to touch up the Lighthouse-battery. Those gentlemen had got it all their own way, for unless some stray shot from the Impregnable, or a shell or two from the bomb, gave them something to think of, they were amusing themselves with pelting away at us, as if we had been stuck in a pillory. We paid them off, and set them dancing about like a set of fellows at Portsdown fair. They never saw heads unshipped as we unshipped them. In half-an-hour the bottle-hitting had come into use, and they had not a gun left to blaze away at us.

“ Although from this time our share of the shot was but sparingly served out to us, yet the other ships were upon whole allowance, and the Impregnable got more than she wanted. She was, from her station, the last of the line-of-battle ships which came into action, and she

took up her station in as pretty a fire as ever whistled round any ship. I've heard say, that by some accident she was exposed to a raking fire, and that her loss was the greatest during the time she endeavoured to get her broadside to the battery. But well she repaid the Turks when the opportunity offered. However, it was requisite, if possible, to get some other ship to take a little of the fire from her, and the Glasgow tried to stand her friend, but the wind had lulled altogether, and she could not reach the Impregnable. There we all were, becalmed, close under the batteries; the powder growing short, and the men getting tired; whilst the Turks—for they had forty thousand soldiers in the place—had always a fresh supply of hands; who, although they were driven into the batteries, fought like devils when they were there; for they had no chance of escape but through their own exertions.

“The shot was like hail occasionally; yet in the Queen Charlotte we had very few killed or wounded. We had knocked the batteries to atoms; and now the admiral was for burning

the fleet, or rather one or two ships which belonged to the Dey; and which he, as he did not know the difference from a fleet or a squadron, —and how should he?— called by the name of a *fleet*. They were burnt by Mr. Richards from our barge, and we only lost two men in so doing. But a Mr. Pocock from the Hebrus, a gentleman who had been under Sir Peter Parker in the Menelaus in America, and who was a regular devil-may-care man as far as shot and shell were concerned, pushed alongside in a rocket-boat; the Turks made a desperate attack upon him, and he and nine of his crew were killed in a minute. The boat came out with only three men left in it, and these three were half inclined to try it again; but we were devilish glad there was no occasion for her going back: the whole batch of the Turks were burning, and one drifted out so near us that I thought my whiskers were a-fire.

“ Well, I need scarcely tell you, that the business was settled to a certainty; the ships were destroyed, the batteries beaten in, and the town shaken; but when night closed in,

there we remained without a breath of wind to blow us clear of the harbour. If the calm had continued, why, Ben, between you and me, considering the magazines on board the different ships were getting so empty that the pursers' stewards might have turned them into candle-boxes without any fear of their blowing up, I'm thinking that we might have carried sand, as well as the donkeys, to repair our own work! Ay, when the sun went down and it began to be dark, I can't say that I felt so easy as I could have wished. I thought I should have been a slave, for I could not shut my eyes to the danger and say, 'Never mind, Tom, many's the day you have weathered, and the same little cherub which sits up aloft to look after you, will get you out of this scrape!'

"The admiral had been wounded and had gone below, and he must have felt quite satisfied with his crew, by the cheers they gave when they heard it was nothing serious. We had already swung the ship's head round to seaward; but the devil a flaw of wind by two bells had come towards us. The flag at the

mast-head was hanging upright and downright like a jackass's fore-leg; and although I kept my eyes aloft like a Methody parson at prayers, yet I could not see it move. We ran out hawsers and got boats to tow; and about four bells a light air came from off the land, we dropped our canvass, and were standing out. Well then, Ben, I felt as a man should feel who had been in such a business — blazing away from four bells in the afternoon to four bells in the first watch. I had left the poop and got to the wheel, cast off the twiddling-lines, and clapped my hands on the spokes, having given it a bit of a twist to find out if all was right astern of us.

“ Although we had given up firing, the Turks had not. The batteries along the Mole could only find work for the stone-masons; but one or two forts over the town, and which, if we had blazed at until now we never could have struck, continued to play upon us. The hawsers were cut and the tow-ropes smashed; but as we had just steerage-way from the breeze, it did not much signify. We were

creeping out, and the rest of the fleet were getting under weigh as fast as they could. The master called out, 'Port a little, Top-rail!' I heard it, Ben, but I couldn't answer. A shot had come through the quarter-deck port from that cursed battery I told you of, and both my pins were shot off below the knee. Mr. Gaze not hearing the answer, stepped to the wheel, and I should have been dead enough if he had not called a couple of stout hands and sent me below. I saw no more of the action; but I heard the thunder roll over our heads, for it came on to rain and thunder and lightning. I heard the cables as they ran through the hawse-holes, and before eight bells had struck and the watch were relieved, I was in my hammock, short of both legs, and had gone through all the business of docking, without once singing out to the doctor 'to hold his hand.'

"Well, Ben, you know the rest. The Dey had had quite enough of that day; and, although he might have known that powder could not last for ever, unless they could get

the saltpetre out of the salt-water,—and you know going to sea they hoist the Blue Peter,—yet he was such an ass as to come to the terms we sent in by the flag of truce: whereas, had he sent back his compliments to know if he could assist the admiral in repairing his ships for him to sail back again, not all the Exmouths, or Collingwoods, or Nelsons, that ever commanded a fleet, could have forced him to beg pardon for his impudence. We couldn't have returned to the fight. I tell you, Ben, some of the ships had already taken the powder out of the brigs; and the batteries on the hills, which had never heard the whiz of a shot or the burst of a shell, might have fired away at us until another fleet came from Spithead.

“It was a great action, Ben, a noble action! a daring action! but it was a lucky action; and as they say fortune favours the brave, so it favoured the admiral. And I'm thinking it did as much for me; for if that shot had not taken off two of my spars, I might not have got moored in Greenwich Reach, but

have been condemned, hull and all, to twist about a broom over my mast-head, like a Dutchman for sale, or gone begging about the country with a wooden stump and a straw-hat, to ask those for charity who were in those days, Ben, a little more indebted to the wooden walls of Old England, than some of them would have been inclined to remember when the danger was over and the service was done."

So said Tom, as he took off his hat and made me a low bow: "My service to you, Ben; our logs are run up, and the glass is turned, I hope, for a long run."

CHAPTER VII.

Even when my time comes, ne'er believe me so soft
As with grief to be taken aback ;
That same little cherub that sits up aloft
Will look out a good berth for poor Jack !

DIBDIN.

I NEVER looked at old Tom without thinking, that, although Greenwich was a long reach in a seaman's life, yet it was a very snug mooring when once we had got the bridles in. Now the gales of wind which whistled over our heads might sing and howl, the rain might patter against the windows, frost and snow, or winter or summer, might come all of a heap, yet Tom and I, after all our hardships and dangers, might lay our heads on our pillows in security, and reap the fruits of our services.

Well, then, I used to think of that battle of Algiers, and think that it was a most glorious battle and victory, and that it would convince all seamen, that Lord Exmouth knew the value of a ship's broadside as well as any man afloat. He might have had more ships if he had asked for them ; but he calculated exactly — perhaps rather too closely — the force which was requisite. He fought and he won. But I was of Tom's opinion, that there are no fools like Turks ! To let the fleet take up its position ! why, they must have known that English sailors would not turn back for a shot or two ; and secondly, that once well within point-blank shot, they could not have turned back, if they were so inclined, without exposing themselves to a killing fire ; so that they might as well have waited until the flag-ship got near the mole, and then have opened every gun upon her. The firing would have put down the wind ; the other ships would have drifted in under a blaze of great guns, raking them fore and aft, and have had to take up their positions under every disadvantage. And then the fol-

lowing day to come to terms, must have been a very agreeable surprise! No man ever led more gallant officers and seamen into battle than Lord Exmouth did; no man ever fought a harder action, and no man more richly deserved what he obtained. But Lord bless their rum-covered Turkish heads!—the French were not quite so civil at either the Nile or Trafalgar, and the Danes at Copenhagen never threw a chance away.

Tom and I had seen more service than any two in Greenwich. Most of my old shipmates in the *Agamemnon* were dead and buried, and we were the regular yarn-spinners of the Hospital; but now year after year crept on, and we were beginning to look at each other as if before long we should part company. Occasionally I received some money from Jane; at least I suppose it came from her, for I had lost sight of the other lady, and believed that she was on the foreign cruise.

We had nothing to set us on the talking tack until the battle of Navarino, and we used to laugh heartily at it. To think of three fleets

of different nations setting to work seriously to sink a parcel of Turkish ships, when half their crews and their admirals were on shore smoking their pipes !—it was no doubt a great victory for either the French or the Russians ; but for the English, it must have been mere child's play ! I know we always treated it as such ; and Tom used to say, ‘ It was just like those fools, who thought, if they were to be killed, they would be killed, so some went on shore to smoke, whilst the others remained to be shot !’

At last, at the beginning of 1835, my old friend Tom began to give way in right earnest ; he seemed to walk with great difficulty, and I thought that the March gales would make him clew everything up and lay him on his beam-ends. But he had his wits about him ; and in February he began to think that Jorum's allowance grew less, and that the old red-nosed landlord thought it no longer a joke to bouse up Tom's jib every Saturday night and get nothing for it but the battle of Algiers, which, in spite of Tom's alterations, was very much like the old story, which Jorum by that time knew by

heart, and could tell quite as well as my old shipmate.

“ Well, Ben,” said Tom to me, “ I intend to square the yards with that old quart-pot to-day, and then I shall be ready to trip my anchor without any load upon the flukes.”

“ And how do you intend to do that, Tom,” said I, “ for the score is heavy, and your tobacco-money has all gone in smoke ?”

“ I haven’t furled sails altogether yet,” said Tom, “ although I may have taken a reef in my brain ; and, Ben,” said he, “ you must come to the Dolphin to-night and be a witness to the payment ; because, you see, I intend to leave you to look after my traps when I brace about my head-yards for a full due. So, mind the signal ! Rendezvous, Ben, at the Dolphin to-night at four o’clock !” and away he went hobbling along, and not exactly making his marks in the mud as straight as a farmer when he plants beans.

Time came, I was there, and Tom at anchor in a dry dock. Jorum did not open the gates to float the hull, although it was Saturday

night, which was the night agreed upon by the old host for returning some of the money in kind which had fallen from Tom's pockets during his dancing days at Plymouth.

"I say, Jorum," said Tom, "did I ever tell you a yarn about Algiers?"

"Oh!" said Jorum, twisting round like a pig in a squall, or like a monkey in chase of his own tail, "did you ever tell me of anything else? I'm blessed if I don't know every man's name from Exmouth's to Pocock's, and from Milne to Millar. I begin to think, Mr. Top-rail, that you must be Joe Miller yourself!"

"Well, don't be surly, old fellow! We are all winding up fast, and some of us may not weather the March gales! Come, give us a drop, and I'll tell you about Napier's business with the Portuguese."

"I don't want to hear anything about Napier and his Portuguese! I've read it all in the papers! You talk of a *drop* — hang me if I don't think you would drink a cask full! and as for a barrel, I should be sorry to see that at your lips!"

“ Ay,” said Tom, “ breakers ahead is a sign of shoal water ! You don’t want me to run on the bank and be high and dry ? ”

“ Run on the bank ? ” said Jorum, who took this in another sense than Tom intended it. “ No, I don’t want that ; we have had lots of those breakers already ! ”

“ What day of the month is this, Jorum ? ” said Tom, apparently recollecting something.

“ What game are you up to now ? ” said the landlord. “ Why, it ’s the 14th of February. ”

“ Give us your hand, Ben,” said Tom ; “ eight-and-thirty years ago you and I were about something else than thinking of beer and pipes at this time ! ”

I gave Tom a hearty shake, and said I, “ That ’s true, Tom ; but after such a day’s work, a drop then would not have been unwelcome. ”

“ Why, what did you do eight-and-thirty years ago ? ” said Jorum, looking as knowing as a Johnny Crow at Jamaica.

“ Give us your hand again, Ben,” said Tom, not noticing the landlord’s question at

all. "When I think, that was the first action we were ever in together; for I was in the *Excellent* when she ranged up to take the fire off the *Captain*, when Nelson clapped his helm a starboard and run alongside of the *San Nicholas*. My eyes, Ben! I can fancy you as proud as a dog with two tails, carrying the swords under your arm!"

By this time Jorum had come to an anchor, and seeing me blaze up a bit upon the business, he said, "Tell us all about that, and Tom shan't be high and dry, as he calls it, any longer."

Of course I could not refuse, and I went through the battle of *St. Vincent* from clew to earring; whilst Tom took in enough liquor to have floated a three-decker's launch.

"Now then," says Tom, "three cheers for this fight!" and he manages to get upon the table: "Now then another drop, and hurrah for *St. Vincent*! One—two—three—hurrah!" said old Tom, as he swung his arm round, with his crutch flourishing over our heads; but at the last cheer he gave himself too much twisting

way, and he fell down upon the table with a most confounded crash: there he remained without moving tack or sheet, and I thought his anchor of life had parted company.

“Cheer up, Tom!” said I; “cheer up! don’t die in a public-house amongst beer-barrels and tobacco-pipes! Hold on until I get you inside the gates; and then, if you slip your wind, why you do it amongst seamen!” Tom had fallen on his face, and I slewed him round, clapping his cocked-hat under his head: he looked dreadfully pale; his lips were half open, and he breathed very faintly.

“He’s not dead, I hope,” said Jorum, “or I shall have a coroner’s ’quest here! Can’t we get him to his own berth?”

“No! no!” said I; “to take him to his berth would be his death! We must keep him quiet and wet his lips with brandy: if that won’t give him a little life, why, I would not give much for his spirit!”

“Spirit, indeed!” said Jorum; “I wouldn’t be the man to go near him after he’s dead; he’ll burn blue to a certainty! Here, old

Tom, open your lips." And sure enough Tom did move them a little, and somehow the brandy ran down his throat all in the natural way.

"Oh! oh!" said Tom, "a little more, and I shall be better!"

"Lord!" said Jorum, "I thought he was going to say, 'if we gave him any more, we should kill him!'"

"Just the *reverse*!" said Tom faintly; "wet my lips, Ben—it will all be over soon—Oh! oh!"

At that moment the doctor of the Hospital rode by, and Jorum rushed out to tell him that one of the pensioners was dying inside.

In a moment I saw him come in; and I thought Tom's eye was more alive, and that even a smile played upon his old countenance. When the doctor felt his pulse, Tom began to speak: "I see," said he, "that it's thick and dry for weighing. My head-yards are braced abox, and they have got hold of my jib-hal-yards. But, Ben, my good old fellow, don't let me die upon this table, like a chap stretched

out to lose his legs. I feel the beer and the smoke a-blowing up my magazine of life ; my spirit-room's empty ; I shall never hear the boatswain's mate's pipe ; and when he turns the hands up, shan't answer my muster."

" Poor fellow !" said the doctor ; " his pulse is very fluttering. How did this happen ?"

Before I could say a word, Tom went on.

" I'm getting under weigh fast, sir," said he, turning towards the doctor ; " but I'm none so poor neither. I have steered through life like a seaman, and never been wrecked but once. I have been fore and aft the world, and seen everything from a monkey to a monarch, but one thing ; and, sir, may I make bold to ask you one favour ?"

" What is it, my old fellow ?" said the doctor ; " anything which I can do for you, I will with pleasure ; but I think you had better keep a little quiet."

" No, no, sir ! it won't do to lose time when the tide is setting against us ; it only makes us pull the longer for no purpose. But this is it, sir : I've heard from Brace, sir, that you cut

his arm off, and likewise kept the ball which killed Nelson. Now, sir, before I fill and make sail, will you be so kind as to let me see it?"

"Certainly, my fine old fellow!" said the doctor, and he began to feel his pockets.

"Lift me up, lads!" said Tom;—"here, youngster," said he to a boy who was in the room, "lend us a back, and act Samson's post. There, that's your sort,—handsomely, Ben, if you love me: my back would never do for a cable, for they couldn't get it into a bend." The boy got upon the table, and doubling himself up, put his back in such a position that I managed to place Tom nearly upright upon his stern-post, he leaning a little upon the boy.

"Here it is!" said the doctor, as he held it towards Tom.

"My eyes are precious dim, sir," said Tom, "as if I had been standing to windward in a heavy gale; but I think I do see it now, with some wire like round it."

"That is a part of the epaulette," said the doctor.

All hands had got close round Tom ; and he said to Jorum as the landlord looked at it, "That 's it, Jorum !— that 's the ball which killed Nelson ; look at it !"

"I see it plain enough, Tom," replied the landlord.

"Thank you, doctor," he continued ; "thank you kindly. Might I have a glass of brandy before they try to move me? I should like one cheer more for Collingwood—one more glass."

"No, no, my good fellow," replied the doctor ; "it would kill you ! Come, Brace, take him to his cabin, and I will come and see him there. Look sharp." And saying this he left the room.

"Why, I think he 's dying," said Jorum.

"No," said Tom, "I 'm worth two dead men now !"

The doctor just looked back. "He has rallied wonderfully," he said. "Now, Brace, look sharp !" And I heard the horse trot away a moment afterwards.

Tom shut his eyes, but continued,—“ The

log's marked up; the glass is nearly out, and I must call the man who is to relieve me. But, Jorum, just one drop more."

"Cheer up! cheer up!" said I; "you have done your duty to your king and your country, and the parson will look after your soul. Get a shutter and a pillow, Jorum."

"None of your making an old woman of me, Ben!" said Tom in a firm voice. "Borrow a tarpaulin-hat, and stick my scraper on the top of it—that's a sailor's proper pillow. Besides, my head has carried the hat long enough, and now it might as well carry the head;—tie for tie, you know, Ben, and no favour."

"I hope," said I, "Tom, we shan't have to clap the hat elsewhere."

"I have faced Death," said he, "too often to be afraid of him: but since my strength has begun to fail me, my eyes to get dim, and my allowance to puzzle me, I may as well be off. But I shan't strike my colours without a struggle. No; I'll never haul down my ensign until the hull's sinking! Now then, Ben, heave and a weigh!"

“ Now, lads,” said I, “ let’s lift him steadily : there, jump off the table, youngster,— I’ve got his head ; go to his heels, boy, and stand by to lift.”

“ He’ll go a long way, Ben, if he goes to my heels : he may pinch them as hard as he likes. Gently, Ben ; I feel very giddy like, as if I could hold on a ring-bolt to avoid *falling up*.”

“ Are you ready ?” said I : “ then *lift* ! ”

“ Stop, Ben,” said Tom ; “ is my gold-laced hat under my head ?”

“ Yes, Tom,” said I.

“ That’s all right then,” he remarked ; “ for when a pensioner’s hat is placed *on* his body, then it is a *dead go* ! ”

“ Lord !” said the boy, as he got hold of Tom’s wooden pins ; “ it will never be toes up with you ! ”

“ Where’s the doctor, Ben ?” said Tom.

“ Gone long ago,” said I.

“ Oh ! is he ?” said Tom : “ then put me down, and I’ll walk home, if it’s all the same to you ; — I thought he was alongside of us.

Here, Jorum," said Tom, as we placed him upright upon his pins; "you and I are quits!"

"Not exactly," said Jorum; "the score's high!"

"Yes, but an agreement is an agreement all over the world! It is fifteen years ago now since you agreed to clear off my score if I showed you the ball that killed Nelson. Ben's a witness; so many thanks to you, and a good night! I watched every day when the doctor came home on his pony, and as the chinks were many, and it was a weight upon my conscience, I thought if I could sham a die in your house, I might get the doctor here. I heard the trot of the animal — bless its heavy feet! — before I gave the cheers; you know the rest; and now I'll go and pitch the medicine out of the window, sleep like a top, and be out of debt to-night and danger to-morrow!"

"Well," said I, "man and boy have I lived for the last seventy years, and had lots of greenhorns in *lines*, yet I never should have thought of such a trick as this. A boy might have done it; but for old Tom to have

set about it—to have clapped on such a face and spun such a yarn! I should just as soon have thought of seeing the Grand Turk turn governor of Greenwich. I wonder where the wit of Tom will cease?”

“Why, nobody gives up his fun until he is obliged,” said Tom. “So now, I’ll go to bed. Come along, Ben: I’ll get you to pull off my legs, for my back is stiff from the fall. —Good night, Jorum! Lord love you! if you get to windward of Tom Toprail, you have only one more to weather! And now the heavy ballast which almost foundered me being pitched overboard, I can hold on a little longer, and pay and go, like a hawser from a boat.”

I got Tom to bed: he was rather giddy, but the next morning he was wonderfully well. What with the fall, however, and the quantity he drank, Tom was not likely to see the next Christmas-day. He was aware of this; and having heard that people settled their worldly concerns before they tripped their last anchors, he sent for me one day, and said, “Ben, I should like to make my testament into

a will, as they call it; and as you learnt to write, and moreover are a scholar of a man, perhaps you'll set to work and chalk it out. But I'll tell you what to write; because I'm given to understand that it must be a man's own wishes, and that if he is not mad enough to get anybody else's wishes, it will be attended to by the king and the governor of the Hospital. So bring yourself to an anchor and write it all down.

“ ‘ I, Tom Toprail, having weathered many a gale, been in many an action, whistled for many a wind, and having lost both legs, do now dispose of my hull and rigging, stores and ammunition, cargo and cot-clews: and hope my soul will have a safe voyage to the harbour of eternity, with a steady breeze and a smooth sea.”

“ ‘ That's all Christian-like, Ben, and proper. I wish it may get there; but if it's all true what the parson tells us, I don't think that the convoy will get safe across the stars.”

“ ‘ If it's quite agreeable to the governor and first lord of the admiralty, I should like to be fitted out in a hammock instead of a

coffin.' (I always liked, Ben, to sleep in my bed, and not get pricking for the softest plank; besides, I never fancied being nailed down in a box, like a parcel of purser's candles.) — 'As for *shrouds*, which I understand are placed over the hull for survey when the masts are gone, I leave that for Ben Brace to look after, and hope he will see me properly stowed away.'

"Ben, that's only what we always did one for another: and if you don't launch me over the standing part of the fore-sheet, you can lend a hand to take the moorings in, and see me lashed up for a full due.

"I leave it as my will, that a pair of white duck trousers, long in the legs and tight over the hips, may, with a pair of new wooden pins, checked shirt, black neckerchief, a round jacket with bright buttons, and a regular neat-cut, low-crowned tarpaulin-hat, with a broad ribbon and 'Royal Sovereign' upon it, be all lashed up with me in the head-clew of my hammock. For, although I have great respect for the Greenwich regulation-cut toggery, yet I

would rather answer my muster in the dress I served in, for I don't think my own legs would feel comfortable in blue stockings.

“ ‘ Whatever part of my hull the doctor may think proper to dock, of course must undergo repairs; but I beg he won't dock my tail; which Ben will see properly parcelled and stowed away. But as the parson says we shall be mustered with all our limbs, I hope a pair of white stockings, and a pair of shoes with large ties, and made long in the quarters, and sharp-pointed, will be clapped in with the rest of the gear; for if my legs are to be re-shipped, I shouldn't like to muster barefooted, like an Irish waister in a line-of-battle ship.

“ ‘ I give my best thanks to the governor, the parson, and Sir William Beattie; and my tobacco-box, with all the pigtail, shag, or Virginia he can find in my cabin, to Ben Brace; and when he dies, which of course can't be far off, he may give my box with the Royal Sovereign on it, to the oldest seaman in the Hospital; and so to continue as the property of the oldest pensioner alive until the last pipe.

“ ‘ I give my pictures of St. Vincent, Trafalgar, and Algiers to Jorum ; he may have also the Santissima Trinidad, to be stuck up in the room where the doctor cleared my account. My medals for Trafalgar and Algiers I give to myself ; and I’m to be buried with them sewed on the outside of the hammock, so that when we are roused up on a sudden, I may be known as a man who did his duty in this world, and would be respected in the next.

“ ‘ To my friend Ben Brace, the last of the old Agamemnons, I leave all my cabin furniture, and all my money which is due to me ; he is to pay out of this what I owe Jorum since I squared the yards by showing him the ball : and he must take care Jorum does not make a dead pensioner drink grog, as the pursers make dead men chew tobacco. And, last of all, having given away all that belongs to me, I request that the sail-maker may do his work in the sunshine, and clap his needle through my nose, in order to make sure that I, Tom Toprail, am *under canvass* for *Dead-man’s hole*.’

“ There, Ben,” said he, “ are my sailing

orders after I have begun to drop down the river to *Gravesend*. But, now I think of it, I recollect a learned marine telling me, that all great people, when they died, stuck up a kind of painted board over their graves, to let any friend passing by know that the master or mistress was dead, without the trouble of knocking: so, Ben, if this is all right, and the governor will allow it, you can clap up a board cut in the shape of an anchor, which means Hope, I believe; and on it you can paint my name and age, and that I was the last but one of the old captains, and so forth; and finish by adding,

Though his body is under hatches,
His soul is gone aloft!"

Well, this affair made me think of myself, and I steered away for Susan's cottage: but I recollected that I had forgotten to ask Tom one favour, so I steered back to his cabin, and says I, "Tom, you'll do me a favour, I know." "What is it, Ben?" said he. "Why," I continued, "it's only to promise me, not to come after me or Susan when you're dead, for it

would frighten the devil himself to see a hammock, with a couple of medals upon it, walk in upon two wooden legs, with a pale face looking out of the head-clew."

"Never fear," said Tom; "when I am under weigh for the cruise, I shall begin my dead-reckoning, and I think if I got beating about Greenwich I should be out of my latitude; for if I am to steer after my legs, I must go to the southward a bit. Never fear, Ben."

I steered away to the cottage, thinking to myself how odd it was that I liked the Hospital better than home, and I clapped it all down to this account: that having been born a fisherman and lived a seaman, I might as well die in a cabin as in a house. Besides, when I saw all my messmates about me, it made me think of the many happy days I had enjoyed; and I soon resolved that I would die amongst those with whom I had lived, fought, and bled.

Every day of my life I walked through the Painted-hall and looked at Nelson: and now I was convinced that old age was creeping fast upon me, for every object appeared dizzy, and

although I wiped the glasses of my spectacles, yet day after day I saw worse out of the only eye which had served me for thirty years.

Susan was the worse for wear also. Her eyes were not so bright as they had been ; her face was getting like a ploughed field : for what was once all youth and beauty, was now wizened like a half-frozen monkey ; the skin was sallow and thin, and the cheek-bones seemed to be coming out of the harbour they had so long occupied. Ay, sad it is to see how preciously ugly we must all grow, if we only live long enough ; and it 's all moonshine trying to fill up the scupper-ways with paint or powder. To be sure, amongst us in humble life we are not so particular in endeavouring to outlive ourselves : give us a snuff-box and a pair of spectacles, and we don't care if the chin of our wife gets as bristly as a piece of pork on board a man-of-war, or if the upper lip has as much hair upon it as a Spanish soldier's. We all grow old together ; and when we are close alongside of a craft for years in the same harbour, we don't see how gradually she requires

paint and putty, and her sides get rather rusty without our thinking that blacking the bends might be beneficial ; and when we come to look at the eyes of the rigging, we find they would be none the worse for serving again. So it is with man and wife : all the stores for service wear out so gradually, that they hardly know when to have a survey, or declare them condemned for ever.

I was past seventy—and that's a long run for a man to make ; Susan was very near the hazy side of sixty : and we began to wag our heads, and tell the same story over and over again. And I found she forgot in the evening what I told her in the morning ; and she used to say, " Why, Ben, how old you grow ! you remember nothing but what happened thirty years ago." But she was wrong, for every night I booked up all the day's work, and thus kept my log ready for overhauling ; whilst Susan and her only daughter—and she was past thirty—amused themselves with some needles and thread, and talking about their neighbours. It was the day that I made Tom's testament

that I saw a great change in Susan ; and she met me at the door, saying, “ Good news, Ben ! good news ! ”

“ What ’s it all about ? ” said I.

“ Why,” she answered, “ we have had a lawyer here inquiring for you ; and that ’s the news ! ”

“ And bad enough, dame,” said I, “ it may be ; for those land-sharks never come sailing about a vessel unless they have smelt the bait towing overboard. What did he say ? ”

“ Why, that,” said dame, “ I can’t well answer ; for when he found that you were not within, he said he was obliged to go to town about some action, and he spoke about an assault and battery.”

“ Bless me ! ” said I, “ how very unlucky ! Perhaps the gentleman wanted some information about assaulting the battery on the Mosquito coast ; and I could have told him all about Nelson, when——”

“ Stop, my dear Ben,” said Susan ; “ I know all about that, and I should have a bad memory if I did not : I remember all about the

birds which ate half of you up, and the ships which sunk with the other half."

"Ah, dame," said I, "you're all wrong on that board; but I'll trim the sails of your memory for you." And I was going to give it her again, when a black-looking fellow hove in sight at the entrance-port of the cottage; and says dame, "That's him, Ben!" I opened the door, and got the stranger to come to an anchor in the front room; and as I was to speak first, being senior officer, I began—

"Fine day, sir."

"Rather wet and muddy," said he. "Is your name Benjamin Brace?"

"If, sir," says I, "you want Benjamin Brace of the old Agamemnon—the man who sailed with Nelson from the time he was the size of a handspike, until the day he died aboard the Victory; if it's Ben Brace who was at St. Vincent, the Brush, the Nile, Cadiz, Teneriffe, Copenhagen, Boulogne, and Trafalgar,—I rather think I am the man, as may be seen from these certificates:"—and then I wagged my right-arm stump, and kept shut-

ting the lid of my starboard eye like a weasel in sunshine.

“I don’t know,” said the lawyer, “much about all that; but my object is to find one Benjamin Brace, late of Cawsand Bay, in the county of Devon, and sometime since pensioner in Greenwich Hospital.”

“Placed there,” said I, “begging your pardon for the interruption, for his services to his king and his country. *I am the man.*”

“Is there no other of that name?” said the attorney.

Up I jumps like a marine when he hears “Grog ahoy!” at one bell; and clapping my larboard arm akimbo, I looked him right in the face, and says I, “Did you ever hear of two Nelsons?”

“No,” said the stranger.

“Well then,” says I, “I never heard of two Ben Braces. There’s my medal for the Nile, and here’s the one for Trafalgar; and here——”

“Stop, stop, my fine fellow,” said he; “I only want to make sure of my man.”

“Just what I said, your honour, when I shot that chap in the mizen-top of the Redoubtable, after he had fired and killed ——”

“Yes, yes,” says he, “I understand all about that; but have you any objection to walk down with me to any of the officers of the college, in order that they may identify you?”

“I suppose,” said I, “that all this showing colours and answering signals is to end in a fight or a friendship; so come along, my hearty. I’ll be back in a moment, dame,” said I: “although I’m rather queer in the hull, and some of the rigging damaged, yet I don’t think that these gentlemen with the long legs are likely to make a prize of me. Come along, sir.”

We started in company; but we had not got far before we met one of the officers, who hailed me: “Well, Brace, how are you and your old friend Tom to-day?”

“Many thanks, sir,” said I; “rather better, although we are both of us clewing up for the anchorage. Maybe, sir, you’ll be kind enough to tell this gentleman who I am—that

I am Ben Brace; for he is come down, I believe, about an action with a battery, and maybe he wants my advice and account to publish the same."

The attorney smiled, and said, good-naturally enough, "It is upon some business of law, and I only wish to have the man identified."

"Oh!" said the officer, "I can assure you that this is old Ben Brace—we have only one of that name in the Hospital, and you may rest satisfied that he is the person."

"Thank you, sir," said the attorney; "that is quite sufficient. And now, Mr. Brace," said he, turning to me, "we will return to your home, for I have some good news for you."

"Thank you, Mr. Rivers," said I, speaking to the officer; "I never knew you do any but a kind service to every man in the establishment. God bless you! I remember as well as yesterday, when Nelson——"

"Oh! Ben," replied Mr. Rivers, "I remember it all; and you are occupying valuable time. Good b'ye! I hope this is a lucky day for you. Steer home with the gentleman;

depend upon it he has some good news for you, for those gentlemen don't come down to Greenwich for nothing."

Well, we parted with Mr. Rivers, and tacked ship for the cottage; and on our way home the long gentleman kept questioning me about my marriage, about Tapes's death, and all about who she was, and who he was, and every blessed thing that ever happened to them or to me since I left Cawsand until I was spliced. And when we got to the door, he walked in like a messenger after a battle, as if the house was his own; he takes a chair, and says he, "Mr. Brace, call your wife. There, Mrs. Brace," said he, "sit down: Mr. Brace, do the same."

"Pray, sir," said I, "had you not better keep your chest warm by putting in a little inside lining, for my wife has always some good spirits in her locker. You know what women are," said I, giving him a private signal with my eye; "they have always something nice to cure the blue devils."

"Many thanks, Mr. Brace; I must decline.

Pray now will you answer this question : Did you ever know one Mr. Tapes of Exeter ?”

“ I did,” said I, “ and so did Susan ; and, saving your presence, although he does allow Susan fifty pounds a year, and pays it as regular as the day comes, yet I must say that a greater scoundrel never weathered the gallows, or sailed through life without running foul of the yard-rope.”

“ He ’s clear enough of it now,” replied the attorney, “ for he is dead.”

“ Dead !” roared Susan ; “ and left me and mine beggars ! And now I shall have to get in as a Hospital nurse ; and my daughter may do the same, or worse. Oh ! oh ! oh !” said the old woman ; and she began to pipe her eye, and hiccup like a child cutting its teeth.

“ Take a drop, dame,” said I ; “ you know that always stops the hiccups. — Well, sir,” said I, “ if you have no objection to smoke, I ’ll take a pipe ; for whenever I ’m put out I smoke, and when I have any luck I drink ; and so now, sir, if you please, you may tell us the worst.”

“The worst is already told, Mr. Brace : your brother-in-law is dead.”

“Dear ! dear ! what shall we do ! what shall we do !” sobbed Susan : “we have not got above twenty pounds in the world, and in our old age we shall be turned out.”

“I wish,” said I, for I couldn’t help it, “you would turn out now. Why, happen what will, I’m snug in the Hospital ; and Jane will lend him a hand she once believed her father. This is not the squall that will blow the sails out of the bolt-ropes, or clap the craft on her broadside ; it must blow harder than this before Ben Brace lowers his topsails, or claps his helm up to scud before the wind. Now, sir,” said I, as coolly as if I had been standing at the wheel in a shower of rain, “you have told us the worst ; perhaps you will tell us the best?”

“Perhaps, ma’am,” said he, “this will be a lesson, late in life, of the necessity of taking things coolly, and never desponding until the misfortune arrives. That Mr. Tapes’s death may be to you a cause of grief, I have no doubt ; but it may a little alleviate your sobs

and your sorrows to know that he has left his whole property to you and yours."

"He was a gentleman," said I.

"Oh! I shall go mad with joy!" said Susan. "I'll get some black bonnets directly. I'm sure I shall go mad with delight! Ben, I'll buy some crape for your arm. Poor dear old Tapes! How nice the girl will look in black! Well, I always said, one of these days luck would turn. Oh! I must go and tell my daughter;—poor dear old man!"

"There she goes," said I, "and not like the rest of us. When the wind is light and the sky is clear, up go the royals and the flying kites; when it is cloudy and murky and squally, then it is reef topsails, up courses, and make the best we can of it under the storm staysails. But with woman, Lord love you, sir! she'd try to carry sky-sails in a squall, and then wonders that all her masts are blown out of her. But I'm obliged to you, sir; it's not Ben Brace who is ungrateful. I own that Tapes did give us the money, and many a time it has made us happy; and I would

rather that he had lived, if his conscience did not disturb his sleep. But now he is gone, I would not have you or any man think that I respected him—not I; he behaved badly to his brother, and every one else he had to do with; and I would rather, after all, that he had lived, and that we had steered steadily along the course which we have kept for the last twenty years.”

“I must be going,” said the attorney, “for my time is my money. But there is one thing, and a most important one, which I had nearly forgotten: there is a confession drawn up by one Tackle before his execution; and before you are put in possession of what is left you, that confession is to be burnt before the executors; and should the seal have been broken and the confession read, there is a clause which would not be the most comfortable. But we shall see all about that in proper time: you must call upon us at Furnival’s Inn to-morrow or next day, as suits your convenience. And now, as you have nearly choked me with smoke, I shall wish you good morning.”

“He was right,” thought I to myself as he went out; for when I began to talk about Tapes and Tackle, I had puffed rather a long cloud, and had made a smoke which none but an old signal-man could see through. Well, I ran and kissed Susan: and I’m blessed if I don’t think every man, woman, and child in the parish—ay, down to the old town-crier with his gold-laced scraper and big bell, had heard all about it, and much more into the bargain. But I had now to unlade my cargo of intelligence, and away I steered for old Tom.

CHAPTER VIII.

But mirth is turn'd to melancholy,
For Tom has gone aloft !

DIBDIN.

TOM had received secret instructions from aloft. He was on his beam-ends in his bed, and he had altered more in two hours than for the last fifteen years. I don't know what he thought of me, for I came into his berth with the end of an old song,

“ What signifies life or its riches,
Or any such glittering toys ? ”

and so forth, when I started backwards like a fellow who runs end on to a butcher's tray, and gets the handle not in use in his eye.

“What cheer, Tom?” said I; “why, you look as if you were all aback and had no hands left to brace the yards about; what’s the matter with you, shipmate?”

Tom twisted about like a porpoise on the grains, and began to gasp like a harpooned whale. I gave a hail for the assistant-surgeon; and when he came alongside of the old tar, he shook his head, and gave me a look as much as to say, “He’s off.”

“Don’t you think, your honour,” said I, “that brandy might give him a cast again?” for I recollected Tom’s old tricks, and I thought he might be up to beating Tom Cox’s traverse; but he never gave a squint of his eye, but laid out as still as a turtle under the half-deck.

“He has broken a blood-vessel,” said the doctor; “and it’s a chance if ever he speaks again. He must be kept quite still for the present, and I will do all I can for him; although,” said he, lowering his voice, “at his age I have very little hope.”

Well, somehow I could not help thinking

that Tom was up to some of his old tricks—and I was very near saying so ; but coming nearer to him he heaved a convulsive sigh, got very pale, and seemed all abroad like. They had a nurse in to attend upon him, and I got permission to watch over my old shipmate. He was much too near the last call to be removed to the sick ward ; so I resolved to see the last of him, as in duty bound.

Whilst I was sitting down, I began to run up Tom's log ; and I knew that no man had done his duty better, and that, from the time he was pressed until this day, there was only that little Boulogne business against him. Then I looked at him as he lay on his bed, old and broken down, without legs and fast sinking ; and thinks I, " Is it to come to this, that we run the risks we do, morning, noon, and night ! are we to go through the long watch of seventy years, get over the hours day after day in the same manner, keep the same look-outs, reef the same topsails, fight at the same guns, and then, after all the escapes, to lie under the turf with all the

rest who went before us, who did no more than we did when alive, and die, after seventy years of toil and trouble, knowing as little about ourselves as the babe in the cradle, and only full of pains and devilments at the last !”

Well, I sat and watched him, and saw how silently the life of a man might depart from him ! With all Tom’s spirit, he was now as still and as quiet as the Atlantic in a calm ; he never moved, and his breath came but feebly. “ Ah ! ” said I to myself, “ in the days of his youth, when everything was welcome, no matter whether pleasure or danger, who was more lively than Tom ? when the squall was heaviest, he would cling to the yard-arm with death staring him in the face whichever way he looked, and yet regard it no more than he would a mosquito. Then, in action who more ready to rush into danger ? who would fling himself into a forest of boarding-pikes, with death seated at the top of every one of them, with a louder cheer than Tom, pushing Death aside with the blade of his cutlass as if he despised him ? ” I thought of

all Tom had done, and I drew near him and took his hand. His eyes opened and met mine, but his were cold and glassy ; and although I thought I once perceived a look of friendship, yet the tongue could not prove that I was correct. I felt a slight feeble pressure of the hand ; and when I leaned over him and said in a low voice—for I was afraid to disturb the silence of the chamber of death—“ Tom, how fares it with you ? ” he made an effort to speak and to raise himself up ; but the voice only came in a gurgle, and he fell back dead on his pillow.

The nurse had left the room, and we were alone—one who had struggled for his country and died—the other, who had been fortunate from his birth, within probably a short period of the same end ; and when I thought of life after this manner, I hardly considered it worth the trouble we take in preserving it. Tom, who had lived in the midst of noise and confusion—whose whole life had been that of an English sailor’s, bold, reckless, generous,—struggling one day, and the next day throw-

ing his prize-money about with all the liberality of one who did not know how comfortable it might make him during a rainy day,—one moment rich, the next a beggar,—making his money like a horse, and spending it like an ass,—was now dead, and in a week would be forgotten as completely by all but myself as if he never had lived;—ay, and I thought that I might meet the same fate!

The nurse returned, and said it was all over. The body was taken to the dead-house; a coffin was made—for hammocks are not allowed; and when I went home, I was without my mess-mate and friend.

Susan complained of my having neglected my own affairs to look after a man who cared nothing for me; and that cursed money bred the first angry word between us. “Yes,” said she, “I dare say, even now, that you will remain to die in the Hospital, because your friend Tom died there, instead of throwing away those old clothes, and wearing those you pay for yourself.”

“Why, dame,” says I, “you are growing

foolish, and I begin to think there is some truth in what I once heard, that good fortune turns more brains than bad fortune; and that a woman never gets mad excepting for love, religion, or money."

She looked at me with so odd a look, that I jumped up, wound my arms round her, and kissed her into good humour. My heart is always on my lips, and I generally speak what I think. "Susan," said I, "forgive an old sailor, who must speak his mind. From the moment we enter on board a man-of-war there are too many eyes upon us, and a lie never goes unpunished. I thought, and I think, that you did not, and do not, make sufficient allowance for a man whose old friend is dead, and who has left everything he had to me."

"Why," said Susan, "what had Tom to leave but his wooden legs?"

"Nothing, Susan, but his sailing instructions; and those I shall fulfil to the best of my power."

"Well, then," said she, "when he is buried, will you leave Greenwich, and cast off that livery?"

“Never, Susan!” said I, in a firm voice. “What! cast off the reward of my services? No. There’s no dress which hangs about the back of a nobleman half so honourable as this; it is of itself a certificate that the man who wears it has done his duty, and that the country has not been unmindful of his services. Well, then, Susan, you ask me to die in a mahogany bed with white hangings; to be buried amongst a parcel of land-lubbers, and to see a regiment of empty bottles stuck up before my eyes, as a warning that I have swallowed my allowance of stuff. No, Susan, it may not be for long that I ask you to remain here. Tom’s death has given me a shake.”

“I cannot see the necessity of your remaining here, Ben,” she said; “and too well do I remember the comforts of life, not to wish to return to them. You do not know the value of money—you throw it away without thought, contented with the allowance of the Hospital; but think of me, condemned here to live, although perhaps with money enough to be comfortable elsewhere. And what are the prospects

of my removal? — the death of my husband — the loss of the man who has been my protector, my friend,—who, when others despised me, never forgot me,—who took me from starvation to share his hard-earned money. Well, Brace, when I think of all this, I balance between gratitude to you and the desire to do as you wish, and the folly of remaining in Greenwich Hospital; which is, after all, but the navy pauper-house, built for the poor of all floating parishes.”

“I tell you, Susan,” said I, laying down my pipe, for I was in grief and I smoked, “that I think more of myself in this uniform, than if I was a lord of the Admiralty. You may buy the Observatory if you like, if that will make you comfortable; but I will not start my anchors, for I ’m moored for life.”

“Do, Ben,” said she, “speak like a Christian, and not like a sailor.”

“What, dame!” said I, as I puffed out enough smoke to have made the neighbours believe that we had a steam-engine at work; “a Christian, do you say? Show me if you can

find any one who has more of the Christian in him than an English sailor."

"Well, Ben, bless you! I always knew that your heart was warm," said Susan; "but, now Tom is dead, what more can you do for him? so leave this place as soon as you can."

"What! leave Tom when he has just tripped his anchor and filled his fore-topsail? Not I: I'll see him moored in his last harbour; and be moored by his side too; so that, by and by, I shall be able to assist him in his navigation when he goes southward after his legs. But I must be off, dame: I have got to place the last rigging over his mast-head, to carry him to his grave and see him covered up, and then—"

"Ah!" interrupted Susan, with a tear in her eye, "I see you care more about your friend than your wife."

"Susan," I replied, "that 's the first unkind word you have uttered since our marriage; and before we talk any more about this business, don't you think it would be as well to wait until we know what old Tapes has left us?"

Come, dame, kiss and let us remain friends ! I do believe," said I, as I passed my sleeve over my face, "I am an old fool ; and yet I would rather see this mark of a good heart, than be able to look on unconcerned." So I took up my hat and walked off.

All was done as Tom had desired. I set to work to parcel his tail with new ribbon. I bought the slops he had mentioned, and put them in his coffin ; and when he was rigged in his shirt and trousers, I fastened the medals over his heart. I carried him, with some others to assist me, to his grave : I threw the earth over him myself ; and when all the rest went away, I lingered by the side of the grave ; for my heart was busy in remembering him whom I had known so many years. The rain fell, and the chill air of evening blew upon my old frame, and I felt like a crazy old craft, separated from the convoy with which she sailed, dismasted in a gale, a plank started, the pumps broken, her crew disheartened, and her captain a coward. When I rose to return to my cabin, I had no old messmate to cheer me with

a scene of my former life—no friend to listen to me—no one to shake me by the hand, and say, “Good night, Ben Brace ! we have weathered another day :” but silently and slowly I straggled to the Hospital. I crept along to avoid the little noise I made, and I would have given—ay, all that Tapes had left us, to hear the wooden legs of poor old Tom as they formerly stumped along the gallery. As I lay down on my bed, I felt a cold shiver run through me, and sleep, which before came to me as my day’s relief, this night never came at all. I thought of Tom without ceasing ; his death had unmanned me more than that of the fifty men on board the Victory, before she returned a shot, at Trafalgar.

CHAPTER IX.

Mil. You lie, I believe.

King. Lie! lie! how strange it seems to me to be talked to in this style!

Mil. Come, come, sirrah, confess.

King and Miller of Mansfield.

IN the morning when I rose, a strange feeling was somehow all over me; my back ached with pain, and through all my limbs I felt as if a severe rheumatism had attacked me. I was hardly able to dress myself; and when I went to Susan, the first remark she made was, that I looked very—very ill. But I had fixed this day to attend the lawyers, and I was not on the doctor's list; besides which, I wished to have all the business settled as quickly as possible, because I imagined, whilst I lay thinking of Tom about midnight, that I heard a strange

noise at the window, which I recollected to have heard called a death-watch ; and these pains and aches, at my age, were a kind of jog which shook me a little.

I had a duty to do, and I was not the man to flinch ; so, looking up Tackle's confession,—which might have been the history of his life, for all I knew, for the seal had never been touched by me, although, in covering the packet over with some other paper, I had placed another seal directly over Tackle's,—“I won't open it,” thought I to myself, “but take it just as it is: it will show that I never looked at the secret orders, but kept them as snug and as fast as lock and key could make them.” I felt very ill, it's true ; but the necessity of going to London gave me a little courage, which I backed up by a small drop of Dutch resolution, and getting into one of those long hearses with windows, which they call omnibuses, I poked myself up in the further corner, and came to an anchor there. I waited—Lord ! how long I waited before we made sail ! until at last I called out, “Hulloa, shipmate, are

you looking out for a fair wind, that you remain at anchor here such a time after you have made the signal for sea?"

"Who 's that, Jack, you 've got inside?" said the coachman.

"Nobody," said the other fellow, "but one of those green-legged chaps from Greenwich, who has got in to hinder the pigs from eating his legs: it will do him good to rest a bit."

As I never was a man to become squally for a trifle, I thought I would take everything quietly; so, by way of amusement, and whilst the man outside kept watching me, I took the confession out of my pocket, and began to tear off *my* cover. It happened that at this moment, another omnibus drove up alongside of us, and a bit of a squabble arose. I looked out, and kept tearing off the cover, until I began to feel that it was off. Looking at it, I saw that Tackle's seal had stuck to the brown paper covering—that I had tore it off clean enough, and there was the original paper all clear for opening. I remembered what the lawyer had said about it, if it was found that I had open-

ed it ; however, I never read a word, but clapped it back in my pocket ; and thinks I, “ Nobody ever doubted the word of Ben Brace yet. I ’ll be all fair and above-board ; I ’ll tell them all about it ; and they ’ll see that I speak the truth, for I should be as red as a marine’s jacket if I was to say what I know is false.”

It annoyed me all the way to Oxford-street, where I got into another omnibus, and told the look-out man to put me adrift at Furnival’s-inn ; and then I kept turning the business on every tack in my mind ; and by the time I was let out abreast of a large building, I had determined how to act, and I acted accordingly. When I got under the arch, I asked a man, who seemed lounging about for strange sail, if he knew where Mr. Hawk and Kite lived, and I was shown by him to the office, and gave a pull at the signal halyards. I was hailed by a young man “ in braid,” and was by him taken into another room, where I found four people sitting down ; so I pulled out my watch, and hoped I had not kept their

honours waiting, as I had still five minutes to veer and haul upon ; it wanting that much to the appointed time.

“ This is the fortunate *youth*,” said the gentleman who came to Greenwich, with a laugh ; “ there is no mistake in the person, and he will be identified again if it is requisite.”

I took off my hat, and smoothed my hair down with my hand, and, giving my tail a bit of a shake, I made the gentleman a bow. Mr. Kite gave me a chair, which I refused to sit upon ; for, says I, “ Many thanks, sir, but I never sit down before my betters.” I knew I was in amongst a shoal of sharks ; and I flatter myself that my open weather-beaten countenance was just as good-looking as the ferrety-eyed Hawk, with his quick squinting look ; and although he went buzzing about like a bumble-bee, first to one and then to another, yet I stood upright, with my eye fixed upon him, and I never budged an inch.

At last, when he had whispered to one, and smiled to another, and squinted at me, and muttered to Kite, he found the wind

of his lungs, and began to blow away after this fashion :—

“ Pray, *Mr. Brace*,” said he with a smile, “ have you brought with you a confession of one Tackle ?”

“ Yes, sir,” said I, standing as stiff as a midshipman on half-pay.

“ Have the kindness,” continued Hawk, “ to give it to me.”

“ If it ’s all the same to you, sir,” I replied, “ I ’d rather be excused ;” and I made him a bow, as much as to say, “ Catch a weazel asleep !”

“ Why not ?” continued Mr. Hawk : “ my partner, Mr. Kite, told you, I believe, that it was requisite we should be placed in possession of that document ?”

“ Yes, sir,” said I ; “ when you have given me my money : then, you know, it ’s all fair and above-board, and you may take the confession and burn it ; but I ’m not a-going to part with it until I get the money.”

“ But, my good man——” commenced Hawk ; but I cut off the tail of his speech.

“Avast heaving, your honour,” said I; “this is the whole of it: I promised Tapes that no human being should see it as long as he continued to act as he did; and I’m not the man to break my word with him—he has kept faith with me.”

“I see,” said Mr. Hawk, who took my manœuvring for a little suspicion; “I’ll remove your scruples—Tapes is dead, and therefore you cannot injure him by producing the document.”

“Not at all,” said I, “if you show me his sailing orders—his testament; because, do you see, although I cannot injure him if he is dead, yet I might hurt his character.”

Upon this they began to talk and to whisper again; and somehow my thoughts turned to days long gone by, when I was boarded by the pirate in the waggon; and I seized hold of my stick, and says I, “If it’s all the same to you, gentlemen, I should like this business to be carried on all fair and above-board. That gentleman, Kite, told me that Tapes was dead, and had left his money to me

and mine ; and that if I came here I should receive it. Here I am ; and if so be that what I have said is all right, and you have got Tapes's testament, read it outright like men, and don't stand shuffling and whispering, and dodging like American bush-fighters. Besides, he told me that the confession was to be burnt before the *executioners*, without being read ; and it will puzzle you, I know, to get all who clapped on the yard-rope together now. So, do you see, when you give me the money and show me the document — for I know a cuckoo from a Jamaica jackass when I see them together, although I am a sailor — then I will burn the confession before as many executioners as you can muster together ; although, I tell you, some of them can't answer to their muster now. But until I get what I am told is my own, I shall keep it safe and snug in my locker here, and that 's the long and the short of it ; and you may believe it all, for Ben Brace swears to the truth of it."

" Well, sir," said Hawk, after he had carried on the war in a whisper, " we will read

you the will ; but as the document is rather long, you had better be seated."

I came to an anchor, for I felt very weak and ill ; and I somehow thought that, owing to my cursed folly, I had ruined Susan and her child. I had a good mind to out with the thing and tell the plain truth ; but then I knew that lawyers are sharks, and one never gets much mercy from one or the other. Well, I took the chair, and placed it right in front of the whole squadron ; and sitting down, I placed my gold-covered hat upon my stick, and clapped my timbers well apart, held out my arm at full stretch, supporting it with the stick, and looking as much like one of those parish chaps in churches who keep the boys in order and are allowed to make as much noise as they like themselves ; and then, quite forgetting my good manners, I called out, " Go it, my hearties ! and if you get to windward of Ben Brace, the devil may change his first-lieutenant."

Kite took the deed, and after humming to clear his voice, he began somehow after this

fashion :—“ Know all men by these presents,” (“ Oh !” thinks I, “ as many of them as you like, old Tapes !”) “ that I, Richard Tapes, being in sound mind and vigour of body, do thus dispose of all my worldly goods and chattels ; in the first place recommending my soul to God, in the full hope of a glorious eternity.”—“ The devil he does !” said I out loud, for I could not help it. “ Then all I can say is, I ’m blessed if I don’t expect to die governor of Greenwich ! — Beg your pardon, gentlemen, but I could not help letting out a little of the cable of my mind ; but the splice is jammed in the hawse-hole, and I ’m brought up all standing—so heave ahead.”

Well, they all looked at me rather oddly, and Hawk left the door open, but Kite went on reading and reading, and I could make out nothing, but that the word “ trust,” and “ Hawk,” and “ Kite,” and “ Brace,” and “ Susan,” went over and over again like boys playing coach-wheel ; and at last, when I thought all the wind was out of the thin man’s body, says I, “ Heave and pall, sir,—unship

the bars ;—it's of no use heaving round any more ; I'm blessed if that gentleman has not hove clear through all : I can't understand a word, and I'll pay any of you a golden guinea to put it into English."

"I thought as much," said Kite ; "it would be much better if you had appointed——" He got thus far, when Hawk stoppered his tongue and looked at him as if he could eat him.

"Now, Mr. Brace," said he, addressing himself to me, "the thing is as clear as lawyers could make it, and adapted to the meanest capacity. The fact is, that the greatest pains were taken by my poor worthy friend Tapes in order that no dispute could arise ; and, as you said before—and I think the words capital—the long and short of it is this ; and here is the clause : 'That if you, according to your promise, have kept the document you possess unopened, the seal entire, and so that no doubt upon that point can be raised, Mr. Kite, Mr. Chatterton, and myself, in conjunction with Mr. Beedon, are to hold the money in trust for you and your wife during

the term of your natural life; and afterwards it is to become the property of your wife's daughter, still to continue in trust; for if she dies unmarried or without issue, the whole reverts to myself. But if the seal is broken,' (I turned rather pale, which Hawk observed,) 'and here is the clause,' he continued, 'then the allowance of fifty pounds a-year is to be continued as heretofore, and to cease entirely at the daughter's death.'

"I wonder," says I, "he did not put it in so many words, and then any man could unlay the strands, and get at the *rogue's yarn*. Well, what 's to be done now, sir?" said I.

"Nothing but what can be done in a moment. We hold the money; show us the seal unbroken, and the money will be paid you as the interest becomes due from the funds."

"But, mind you, Mr. Hawk," says I, "the confession is not to be read."

"On no account," said Hawk; "it is to be burnt, before us all, there, in that fire;" and he went and stirred it up. "We have a person here who can swear to the handwriting of

Tackle, for we have several letters of his during the time he was connected with Mr. Tapes. Here they are: it can be decided in a moment, from the peculiarity of his signature, which we are certain you could not forge. If the paper has nothing written on its outside, we shall open it, look at the signature or the handwriting, decide it in a minute. If against you, you will have your remedy at law; if favourably, into that fire goes the whole concern. Now, give us the paper."

"Hear me, gentlemen. I have sailed with Nelson, and been by his side in every battle, and have learnt to speak truth and shame the devil: from the time I have been the height of a marline-spike, to this moment, I never told a lie to hurt an enemy or serve a friend. I don't want money; I'm provided for. For myself, I neither want Tapes's money nor Tapes's kindness; but I feel for my wife, because the property is properly hers — it is left on her account, and not on mine; and, therefore, it is hard if through any carelessness of mine she should be left to want."

“Then you have opened the seal?” said Hawk, his little eyes looking through me, whilst Kite kept making signals behind his back for me to hold my tongue.

“I never said so,” I continued; “and maybe I was only thinking what a scoundrel Tapes was to the last, to leave his sister-in-law dependant upon the integrity or the carelessness of an old sailor. But I’m not going to back out of the matter in this manner: all I want of you, gentlemen, is to believe me, to listen to what I have to say, and then to act fairly between man and man. When Tackle gave me his confession, it was about five minutes before he was hanged, he was as cool as a boatswain’s mate going to give a man a dozen at the gangway. ‘Ben,’ said he, ‘here is everything concerning the business — you understand me; take it — tell Tapes you have it, and he will be frightened into doing something for your wife. But mind, if he does give you enough, promise me on your oath not to open it—not to read it; but keep it until he is dead, and then destroy it.’ I told him I would. ‘Remember, Ben,’ he said, ‘this

is the last request of a dying man, excepting this—' and he placed his daughter's hand in mine. I took it, and said, 'So help me God, I will never read one word of it !' 'I'm satisfied,' said he; 'and now I am ready to die.' *He* believed me—he, gentlemen, when the rope was round his neck, believed me; and you, I think, cannot doubt the man whose word would be believed by every man in Greenwich.—Then, listen. On my way to your office this morning—But no—I'm before my yarn—When Tackle died, I took his daughter on shore, and the first thing I did was to get a piece of tough brown paper, cover up the confession, and I got Nelson's seal and stamped it; I then locked up the paper, and from the time the fifty pounds a-year were paid, it has never seen daylight,—until this day my eye has never been directed towards it, my curiosity never excited by the desire of reading it. I held it on a solemn promise; and I have kept my promise! To-day, gentlemen, in my way to town, I took off my own cover; and, in so doing, the seal which Tackle had placed came off also."

Hawk clapped his hands ; and Kite stepped up : “ Take my advice, my old friend,” said he, “ and don’t show it ; keep it in your pocket until I can send you an adviser.”

“ Mr. Kite,” said Mr. Hawk, “ I desire you to leave this room directly : Mr. Brace is not your client, I presume. He admits the seal to be torn off ; and the words expressly are—‘ the seal entire ; so that *no doubt* can be entertained upon the point.’ *No doubt*, gentlemen—remark that, and couple it with the other words, and who shall dispute to whom the property belongs ? Give me the paper, and let these gentlemen be witnesses that the seal has been removed. As for the reading of the paper, that, of course, we shall form our own opinions about. A man does not open a seal without going further ; and if you, after the warning given you by Mr. Kite, have opened the cover at all, you must have been either mad or drunk. The fact is clear : he read the confession after the fifty pounds had been paid ; and he has invented this story of opening it to-day, because he finds the money likely to slip through his fingers.”

“Avaust heaving there, if you please, sir!” said I: “the day is gone by when I should have shaken the words of sorrow out of your throat for what you have now said; but, sick as I am at this time, and feeling a heavy squall about to burst upon me, without sufficient hands to shorten sail, I have nothing left but to up helm and scud. If you had acted like a man, I would have placed the paper in your hands: here it is — the seal broken, I’m too much of a sailor to deny it; but, as I know such as you are nothing but land-sharks, I’m blessed if I don’t take that gentleman’s advice, and I’ll get a bigger shark than yourself to fight you! — Sir, I’m obliged to you,” said I to Kite; “you’re an honour to your profession. It shows an honest man when he comes forward to protect the old, the poor, and the innocent; but as for that other fellow, who seems as hungry as Port-Royal Tom, he’ll find it hard to get the paper, and without it he cannot get the money.”

“Stop, Mr. Brace,” said Hawk, “and understand me. The money was left under cer-

tain conditions: those conditions are favourable to me. You will only rush headlong into ruin by opposing me: a writ of discovery will be issued; your not producing the paper will be the strongest evidence against you; and ultimately, when it is brought forward, you will find a heavy bill to discharge, and no money to do it with; for from this moment I shall stop the payment of the fifty pounds a-year, until the matter is decided. Mr. Kite has, under the influence of his feelings, (and I feel for you and yours as much as any man,) advised you to keep back this paper; he has advised you badly. The consequences will be ruinous—your wife's misery and want, beyond a doubt."

"Ah! there it is!" said I. "For myself, I don't value the money any more than a loaf of soft tack; but for her who has been a kind wife and good helpmate to me, and who might justly look forward to this money, to make her slip easily off the ways, until the dog-shores are sent adrift,—for her I do feel. But, gentlemen, I am very ill, and nearly broken down;

my anchor's a short-stay peak, my sails loose, the yards braced for canting. Surely you, who call yourselves men, wouldn't run on board of me like a pirate, and rob me of the little I possess as my cargo. I'll do what is right and fair; but I am not going to strike my colours without a broadside; I'm not going to see poor old Susan wrecked on the bank, without veering away some cable to assist her. Here's the paper:" and I clapped my hand in my bosom to get it out again: when Kite said,

"Keep it where it is. Mr. Hawk, as an honourable man, cannot wish to possess a document to which at present he has no right. You are looking very ill; get home as quickly as possible, and I will either come myself or send you a proper adviser. You have already shown too much in showing the seal off; but a hundred circumstances may arise to assist you; and when you think you have the least chance, you may have the greatest. The more desperate a case is, the more likely certain attorneys are to win it. I am not one of them; but I owe you a debt of gratitude of which

you are ignorant just now, and I will not see you ruined by my partner."

"There's my hand, sir," said I: "you speak like an honest man. I shall go home almost broken-hearted with sorrow. I could have weathered any squall which only blew against myself; but, instead of towing the craft which has stuck close to my side for thirty years in safety, I have run her down when the harbour of security was under our lee: that I can't get over; 'I feel it,' as Nelson said when his death was approaching, 'rising in my breast,' and I am, sir, very ill indeed — I never felt so weak before, and it does not require much of a sea to shake such an old hull to pieces."

"Will you take a glass of wine, Brace?" said Mr. Kite kindly.

"No, sir, I thank you; I could not drink in this house for the universal world. I can hold on until I get home, although I feel rather weak and giddy.— My service to you, sir," said I to Hawk; then I bowed to the two others, who had never said a word the whole time, and I left the room. Mr. Kite followed

me: "Take my advice, Brace," said he as he shook me by the hand: "lock up that paper in your cabin in the Hospital — don't let a soul read it or look at it; and I need not tell you to act as honourably as you have hitherto done yourself. Get home; you want a doctor of medicine more than one of laws just now. Don't agitate yourself by telling what has happened to your wife; but keep quiet, and trust in me."

"It's only yesterday, sir," said I, "that I buried the only man who could say a word about Tackle; and when I placed him in his grave, I got thinking about all we had done and seen together, until the evening came on, and the rain fell a little. I got up with a coldness I never knew before, and I was only able to muster up strength enough to come to town, kept up by the hurry of poor Susan, who thought that once more she would wear a pendant from her mast-head, and sink into her grave a respectable old woman. If I have ruined her, I shall never live to hear her tell me of it. God bless you, sir!—Hoy! omni-

bus, ahoy ! — why, you want a crow-bar to pick your ears with — give us a lift to Charing-cross.” And I waved my hand to Kite, and got safe home.

CHAPTER X.

“ I ’m bubbled !
Oh ! how I am troubled !
Bamboozled and bit !
My distresses are doubled ! ”

Beggar’s Opera.

WHEN I got home that evening, I did not require the purser’s steward to stop my allowance. I was in the doctor’s list hard and fast ; I felt all the pains and aches of cold, rheumatism, disappointment, vexation, and sorrow.

Ill as I was, I took Kite’s advice, and before I went to Susan I locked up the cursed paper just as it was. Having stowed it under all in my chest, and covered it over with all my heaviest traps,—“ There,” said I, “ stick there ! and I wish my fingers were off my hand for having touched you ! ” and then with a heavy

heart,—not like that I used to have, it seemed like a weight heavy enough to sink me,—I went to Susan.

She was, like all women, standing with the door open ready for the news; and long before I weathered the doorway she began,—“ Now, Brace, make haste—tell us all about it. How much has he left us? when are we to have it? I have sent for the crape and the black bonnets. Is he buried yet? When are you to go to town again? I wonder if we can't get some of the money to-morrow. Lord! Ben, you look very pale—take a little brandy, and then talk as fast as you can.”

“ Susan,” said I, as I sat down in the chair, “ they say it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good; and mayhap you know that when the wind's foul for one, it is fair for another. It's of no use, dame, your asking as many questions as the clerk of the check when he comes to muster a ship's company in the harbour, and never waiting for an answer. The last question, however, is the easiest answered:— I am ill; I feel that I am following in poor Tom's wake,

and that before long I shall be under hatches, as he is now. No, dame, take away the bottle—that's not the kind of spirit I want now; and as for Dutch courage, I never required that. I have nearly expended all my breath; and when a man has been blowing away at the bellows of his lungs for seventy-seven years, why he's lucky if he gets wind enough out of them to keep up even a flickering flame. Sit down, dame; I've much to tell you. There—come nearer to me, and give me your hand; I'm not going to eat you, Susan, so don't be frightened. Let me see—it is now some thirty years ago since you and I were spliced; and though we have seen the rough and the smooth of life, I don't think we have ever showed our colours as enemies. And when I remember what you were at Cawsand; how through me your former husband was detected in the smuggling—how in poverty he died, and how, when the storm was the hardest and the fog the thickest, I stepped forward—ay, and gladly stepped forward;—I say, when I think of all this, that I loved you as a boy — loved you as a man —

loved you as a husband and as a friend,—I say I don't think, when you hear what I have to tell you, that you will let me be swamped without lending me a hand."

"Ben," said she, "I don't like this kind of beginning—it brings many a bitter reflection along with it; but, thank God, it brings with it an increasing gratitude, without the remembrance of it deadening the obligation. You look very ill, Ben,—you had better go to bed, and we'll talk over all this to-morrow."

"You know," said I, "that this morning I went to London. You saw the paper sealed,—and you know that ever since Tackle's death I have never overhauled the contents of the paper. I can guess what's inside of it: of course it is merely, that Tapes and his brother were partners in the concern, and that any discovery would have turned all the King's lawyers like a pack of hounds on the scent. When I was looking on at a quarrel this morning in that painted hearse they call an omnibus, I broke the seal: it seems that by doing this we lose every farthing that was to have come to us. You

start, Susan ; I can only tell you that I have brought back the paper. And here I must clap a stopper on my tongue ; for I cannot find any good to tell you, and I don't like to croak of evil."

" Then," said she, her face showing signals of a change,—“Then, through your idle curiosity, myself and my child are penniless ! How all the women who were envying me will now sneer at me !” And then she took her handkerchief and swabbed her eyes.

“ It's of no use, Susan,” said I, “ making bad worse ; one of the lawyers said he would come and advise me.”

“ Oh !” said Susan, “ I have heard enough ; every step that led to my ruin in life I can trace to you : but for you, my first husband might have lived in plenty, and left me sufficient ; but now, what do I see before me ?—an age of poverty, without a hand to help me !”

I could not stand this. I knew that Susan, who looked always forward with some hope that one day she would be in a better condition, could never bear the news which I had to

tell. At this moment, I saw her look as if she hated me. I did rub my sleeve across my eyes, for I felt that I could have braved any blow rather than a word of unkindness from her. I had not broken the seal intentionally; and I felt the words she spoke more sharply because they came from her whom I had rescued when almost starving, and to whom I had ever behaved with kindness and affection. Ay, all these thoughts came rushing over my mind like the tornado on the coast of Africa—I saw behind me many a year, when day after day I had thought of Susan,—all,—our first meeting, until the death of Tapes on board the hulks,—and somehow I could not plug up the scupper-holes of my eyes, and a tear or two did drop over the lids.

“Forgive me, Ben,” said Susan, as she wound her arms round me,—“Forgive me, Ben, or I shall hate myself for ever! It was only in the moment of disappointment that I could say what I did say. There,” she continued, as she took my hand,—“there, only say you forgive my ingratitude, in having said

words which have brought tears into the eyes of the most generous of men, and I'll never think of the money any more! Can't we be happy as we have been? There, look at all the little comforts we have got together; and now, in our old age, what would be the benefit to us if we had the whole gold of the world? Only kiss me, Ben—kiss me, Ben, and smile again, and I'll never say one word to make you unhappy."

I took her in my arm, and as when the sea is the highest, and breaks with the greatest violence on the beach, rushing up to the very cliff, so it recedes the farther as it again ebbs back, carrying with it half the shingle which stopped it before,—so did I feel my heart beat twice as strongly for Susan, even for the moment of overflow which had swept over it.

"Ay, Susan," said I, "you are right. Is it not odd, that when we have rubbed through life upon short allowance, we should find ourselves, just when the gale is the strongest, and we less able to weather it, with more affection than we required to begin the cruise? So it

is through life : the shipwrecked boy who has clung to a plank—the last that broke adrift from the sinking vessel—and who has held to it for his existence until his strength nearly fails him, finds, when assistance does come, ten thousand times more aid than would have served him at the first. It is true, this money might have given you a larger house, and more to eat ; but if this cottage *is* sufficient, we can do without Tapes's money, which, for my part, may all go to the devil or the lawyer. One thing, Susan, has always occurred to me through life, and that is, 'not to cry out before I am hurt.' A man may shorten sail when he sees the squall upon the water, but he is a fool who furls sails in a calm because a gale may come. Many 's the time I have seen the black cloud settle on the horizon and threaten the heaviest fall of rain ; yet a flash of lightning has come, and every drop has fallen clear of the ship, whilst the cloud dispersed and the bright sun shone full upon us. I'm ill, Susan — more so than you think, and in spite of the rain I'll go to my cabin ; for

if I was to die out of Greenwich, I should never lay my head in peace. I'll ask Sir William to let you be my nurse; he is too generous to refuse such a favour; and besides, he knows that I would rather see him at my last moment than any other man alive. Good-night, Susan! I know you'll forgive my carelessness. I never read a word that was in the paper; and, whatever you may think of me, I am sure you will never suspect me of telling a lie. If I get worse in the night, I'll send for you; but I think I can hold on, for I'm made of good stuff. You smile, Susan: God bless you!"

She gave me another kiss; and when I walked through the gates, I felt happier than I had done for years, for I felt that she would be able to bear the blow which I had so unconsciously prepared for her.

The next morning I found my chest like a midshipman's—everything on top, and nothing at hand. In stowing away the paper, I had piled everything I could over it; and being, I suppose, a little adrift myself, I did not stow them away as I generally did. I awoke better, but

still with some odd feeling which I did not like ; — I was anxious to see Susan through the difficulty. When Susan came to see me, “ Oh, Ben,” said she, “ it’s all right now !— you are better, and I am satisfied.” We had a little bit of talk, and then she returned home.

The day was very fine, and I thought if I just took the stiffness out of my legs, it would do me good ; so I popped on my hat, and taking my stick, I steered away to sun myself on one of the benches ; and there I got thinking about steam-boats, and Indiamen, and every blessed thing but the lawyer and the paper. Thinks I, “ What’s the use of masts and sails, and all such expenditure, when, by working a little smoke through a funnel, it does not signify a straw if the wind is foul or fair, but away the vessel will go eight knots an hour straight on end and make her port ?” Well, I got turning this end for end in my mind, and thinking how nicely we should have been served during the war if these things had been in use then, and what a glorious opportunity it would be at the opening of the next to fit out a good-

sized boat, carrying one long gun on a pivot, and about forty men for a crew,—not your picked-up-alongshore fellows, with long tails to their coats, and cigars in their mouths, but some of the chips-of-the-old-block fellows, with large trousers and broad shoulders, who would look to windward in a gale of wind, when it blowed so hard that if they did not shut their mouths they would be blown up:—then it would be—paddle away within long range—make her out well—touch her up at a distance—run alongside when the colours are down—clap a tow-rope on board and see her safe under an English flag, and out again, before a sailing vessel with a foul wind would have got ten miles from the place, and half the privateers on the sea would have been within sight to recapture their prize. “Ay,” thought I, “if ever another war does begin,—but somehow we have got in the doldrums in that respect, — I would rather be on board of a good steamer than the best frigate in the navy;—not but that I remember the delight of sitting under the forecāstle bulwark when the sea flew

over the craft, and when we spun our yarns, and felt safe and snug in our fancy frigate. We should always support a new invention ; as one of those smirking chaps said to Tom, when he wanted to unship his timber toes, get him into dock, and fit him out with cork legs. Tom said, however, ‘No, no, I hate corks in every way; if I fell overboard when I had drawn a few of them, my legs, instead of finding the bottom, would float, and I should have to walk on my head to get ashore again.’ ”

Well, I got thinking of one thing and another, when I was startled by the noise of a carriage which drew up alongside the gates, whilst two chaps in cocked hats and long canes, who had been standing abaft, jumped down, opened the cabin door, and out comes the captain and his wife. Up I got directly, and steered towards the gate ; for I thought I had never seen so fine a concern, with such a crew. The gentleman was a man about five-and-forty, togged off to the nines ; and he gives his arm to his lady, and makes sail right towards me, steering for the governor’s house. Well, I did

as we always did—saluted a stranger when he came into port ; so, as they went by, I took off my hat and scraped my leg. The lady was looking the other way at a gingerbread barge belonging to the Lord Mayor, which was bringing down a batch of hungry fellows to eat small fish ; but the gentleman took off his hat, and said to his lady, for I heard him, “ My dear, you did not see that gallant old fellow who welcomed you to Greenwich.”

She gave a hasty cast of her eye, and they went on. “ Well,” thought I, “ now we have exchanged salutes, I’ll just ask the admiral’s name ; so I steered up to the gates and hailed the servants,—although, to be sure, they looked more like Austrian generals than English footmen.

“ What cheer, lads ?” said I ; upon which all these land-lubbers began to grin. “ Cheer !” said one ; “ who cheered ? I should think, old boy, you didn’t give a cheer when the Frenchmen whipped off your arm, or bunged up your eye ?”

“ Then you’re just on the wrong tack,” said

I ; “for it was at Trafalgar, and I did not value my arm, no, not at a shilling, when I thought of the victory.”

“Ah !” said one of them, “that happened before we were born, old boy, and we are not going to believe all you choose to tell us about that.”—“What a rum coat the old fellow has got on !” said another ; “And twig his cocked hat.” — “Why,” said the coachman, “I wonder he walks about, when the pigs might mistake his legs for cabbage-stalks !” Upon which they all set up a laugh ; and one fellow takes his white gloves off and claps them in his pocket, whilst the other asked who had the honour of making my clothes.

“I say, my lads,” said I, for there was a crowd of pensioners and idlers gathered about, “is that the way you answer a civil question ? I thought you servants were taught better manners.”

“Servants !” they all exclaimed : “mind your own business, old boy, and don’t talk about what you don’t understand.”

“What !” said I, “are you ashamed of your

rigging, — are you ashamed of your master's clothes? Now look here," says I, as I showed the Greenwich mustering suit: "these clothes are the reward of honest service for my country. I have fought for it—bled for it—whilst you powder-monkeys have only cleaned your master's shoes, or carried away the plate on which he fed.—What, strike me!" said I, for one of the fellows raised his stick; "strike Brace if you dare, and we'll haul you through every pond in the place, and wash the flour off your head under the pump. Don't commence action," said I to half a hundred of my messmates; "but only let them fire the first shot, and we'll soon see if we, old as we are, can't tackle them to their hearts' content. I only asked a civil question—I wanted to know to whom the carriage belonged, and I was then going to take them over and give them something to drink the King's health, when they began to jeer an old man of seventy-five with only one arm. But what can you expect from chaps who are ashamed of their own colours and their master's livery?"

These flamingoes began to think it was no good battling the watch with us ; so they all three got upon the forecastle of the coach, and they steered away for a public-house. “Here’s after them !” said about a dozen of the old ones ; “and we’ll get them into a line for their impudence !” and I was left alone by the gate. But as for the line business, that was a failure ; for the servants, not liking to get amongst the old boys, remained on the coach-box, and drank their beer aloft, and shortly returned. I was backing and filling about the place—for the weather was warm, and I felt better by being in the air—when I saw the servants come down by the run from the box, clap their scrapers all right and square, and handle their sticks like the drum-major of a regiment. I turned round, and I saw the lady and gentleman coming towards the carriage, accompanied by Sir William. I heard him say, “I dare say your lordship will find him at his wife’s cottage, for he generally goes there about this hour. Poor old fellow ! he was rather ill last night, and he is getting very aged for a

sailor." ("Well," thinks I, "what can the doctor mean by a great age for a sailor?" but I heard his reason.) "When they first enter the navy," the doctor said, "they are habituated to much ardent spirits, and the continued use of them is more pernicious than all the fatigues they undergo. Oh, here is Brace!" he said. I took off my hat, and made a bow. "This is Lord Nelson's old follower, for whom your ladyship inquired."

She looked at me—I knew her, for the mole in her forehead was as plain as the seal on a letter. I did not do what my heart prompted me to do—run and kiss her, and welcome her who had come to me at the very moment when I was most beset with difficulty; for I thought it would be wrong for me, an old sailor in the Greenwich uniform, to take hold of a lady covered up with silks, and with a bonnet over her jib large enough for a coal-scuttle! Well, I was fairly aback; and it was of no use turning the hands up to brace about, although I had got stern-way and was backing a small distance off. I can't write what I did

feel—it was uncommon to me. I felt as if I could have hugged her and kissed her; and yet somehow I felt as if the thought was a kind of presumption:—I thought my heart bade me go forward like a man and an uncle, and then I thought discipline kept hauling me back: it was a regular squabble between affection and duty; but when the heart's in the right place, affection will carry the day, without neglecting one's duty. The servants were looking—the coachman had placed himself as upright as a pump-bolt—Sir William had just called me — his lordship was eyeing me; when what does Jane do, but she drops her rain-preventer, — and she gets head-way upon her, runs me right aboard, claps her arms round my neck, falls to a-kissing me, and bursting out a-crying, said, “Uncle Ben, uncle Ben! let this prove that I have not forgotten you!”

“My eyes and limbs!” said old Lanyard, as he hobbled away, “that is a queer go, surely; there's old Brace a-kissing the lord's wife!”

I am thinking that I should have been done outright if I had not been afraid to touch her : my stick fell out of my hand, and somehow my arm got round her waist, and says I, " Blessings on you, Jane ! you have hove in sight when the enemy were likely to capture me ; and now that I see you—ay, and see you happy—I don't care how soon I die. Lord love you, Jane, and bless you ! I always knew your heart was a good one—I knew that you would come and see me."

" Give me your hand, my fine old fellow," says his lordship : " Jane has often told me of your kindness to her, and the manner in which you behaved to her during one very trying hour of her father's——"

" Belay all that, your lordship," said I, interrupting him ; " not a word about it : I'm at this moment in great distress about that affair, and if Jane — I beg your honour's pardon, but I can't help calling her Jane — will just let your honour unlay the strands of this difficulty, you will make me and Susan happy for ever."

“ Oh !” said Jane, “ I insist upon going directly to Susan : I have never seen her since I was a little child, and I remember her pretty face.”

“ It’s better you did not, Jane,” said I ; “ for you never will be able to make out her features—she’s grown old. We all sweep along that tide together ; and although now and then sickness gets us into an eddy and twists us about a good deal, yet we all float along much the same. I dare say you would have passed me half a thousand times and not have known the man who wrapped you up in a blanket and laid you to sleep when your mother and my poor old father slept more soundly. But I must avast, for you’ll catch cold, and I must tell Susan you have been here to visit me.”

“ No, no,” said his lordship : “ get into the carriage, Brace, and we’ll drive to the cottage. Come, Jane, let me hand you in first.” And he walked off with his wife.

Well, it was a fine sight to see those footmen who had jeered me, standing at attention,

one fellow holding the door open, and the other standing like a marine at muster, whilst I, the old sailor, was handed into the carriage by a lord. I felt I had always done my duty in this life, and therefore I was not ashamed to look any man in the face.

“ Now, uncle Ben, listen to me,” Jane began ; “ and let me run up my history. I dare say you know already that my husband is a sailor. But listen, uncle : when you last saw *her* — for you never would mention her name, you know, — and when your last request was for an admission into Greenwich, you never saw me, you truant old fellow ! and I was waiting for my last kiss. I shortly afterwards went into the country with her, and remained there until I was sixteen years old—you know I was born in 1792 ; and now, instead of seeing the pretty little girl, as I was in 1805, you must remember that I am now forty and more, so that I am getting old and speak my mind. I learned from Hardy that you were at Greenwich, and at that time I had only the wish, not the power to serve you. Much as

I would have given to have come down here and seen you settled——”

“Moored for life, my dear,” interrupted his lordship.

“— Yet I neither had the means, nor the permission to gratify that desire. I heard that henceforth your life would be one of ease and comfort ; that you would sleep without having one ear open for a summons ; and that you would enjoy comparative luxury. I well know you might have been an officer ; I have heard Nelson tell *her* that he wanted to make you one, but that you preferred following him : and, uncle Ben, you are a much greater man now than if you were laid up in ordinary in rotten row, (you see I have learned all your sea-terms,) as his lordship says is his lot. In 1810 I married Captain Hennington—and there’s the man ; he was sent on the North American station, and I, by way of being as near him as possible, went to Bermuda, and lived there——”

“And I pity you, Jane,” said I ; “for never was there such a sandy hole in the world, with

its white houses and cedar trees. And as for water, why if it does not rain for a month, they have their mouths open like alligators catching flies, and they are obliged to preserve that stuff as a sailor does his grog.—I beg your honour's pardon, but I couldn't help it."

"Talk away, Ben Brace," said his lordship; "there's no distinction now between officer and man: I'm on half-pay, and you in Greenwich."

"Now, Hennington," said Jane, "let me talk, if you please. I have more to tell uncle Ben than you can have; principally because I want to explain to him how it was he never saw me. I remained at Bermuda until after the peace in 1815,—indeed, I did not return home until 1816; but at that time Hennington's father was alive, although seriously ill at Florence. I came home with him in his frigate, and she was paid off at Portsmouth——"

"Of course, ma'am," said I, "ships from a foreign station always go to Portsmouth, or the River."

"That's all right," said his lordship.

“It’s all wrong, uncle Ben,” said Jane, smacking my hand; “remember you are under my command,” said she, smiling, “and keep ‘Silence fore and aft!’—We did not stay a week in England, and during that time I went down to see my husband’s brother, in Yorkshire; but I sent you some money.”

“Ay!” said I; “I thought it came from you, although, Lord love you! I was half inclined to think you had made a ‘haul of all’ of your memory, and that Ben Brace was paid off from your books.”

“Nonsense, my dear uncle! you could not have fancied any such thing, unless you believed your Jane to be a most ungrateful creature.—No sooner, however, had we paid our visit, than my husband, using his man-of-war-like commands, gave me sailing orders for Italy; and as soon as we could contrive to get ready, we started, and went to Florence. We found his father ill—very ill; but he was one of those men who, having lived steadily in their youth, survive a life of mental exertion only to fall into second childhood: his memory was

fast going, and he seemed never very anxious to exert it, even for his own son. Year after year passed away — he lived, although he might be supposed dead, for he understood nothing : he could not think, he could not reason, he could not remember; he was fed as a child, controlled as a child.”

“Spare me—spare me, Jane,” said his lordship, “the repetition of that which is already too painfully impressed upon my mind. Of all scenes, the most dreadful to have brought familiarly before our eyes is that of seeing the man die at top first—to see the still robust stem unable to put forth any leaves—to see the man who was once all energy, all sense, become a weak and drivelling idiot;—it is the most cruel lesson to humble pride that the most exalted can be taught; and well may I say with him, Ben, who knew a sailor, and who wrote his life,

Spare, oh spare me, gracious God !
The hideous sight so often seen,
When Reason quits her long abode,
And leaves us what we erst have been !

It is sufficient for Jane to tell you that he lingered in this dreadful state for upwards of fif-

teen years, kept alive by her anxious care and solicitude, and that, in all the affection of her excellent heart, she used to say, ‘He is your father, my dear, and it is my duty to take care of him.’”

When his lordship said this, and I saw a tear standing in his eye, I couldn’t help taking Jane’s hand; and as I kissed it, I gave her the old man’s blessing.

“Well, Ben,” she continued, after giving me a look of acknowledgment, “it is useless, I believe, ever to dwell upon painful scenes: it is of no use looking back—we should look forward. By his death my husband came to the title, and at the beginning of this year we both returned to England. Again some family business took us into Yorkshire; and no sooner had we made ourselves comfortable in London, than one of my first cares was to look for you. You see before you your captain, Ben, and you will obey his orders: but I leave him to tell you what he wishes, for you will find in him all the genuine worth of the seaman, with all the sterling qualities of the gentleman.”

We drove up to the door, and I thought Susan would go mad when she saw her old husband in his blue stockings lugged out of the cabin-door of the carriage; she kept bobbing about like a trim buoy over the best bower-anchor in a short sea, and then recollecting that it was Saturday, and that her clean Sunday's cap was upstairs, she bolted away to clean herself to muster at division.

“I beg your pardon, my lord,” said I, “but I have something to say to you quite alone.” His lordship came into the little garden behind the house, and I began—“Your honour has heard of me afore; and I hope that, whatever character I may have had through life, I have always had that of being all fair and above-board with every man. You seem to be very fond of Jane, and well you may be,—as a child, a fonder creature never drew the breath of life; and I feel sure that she has never deceived you.”

“Deceived me!” said his honour; “certainly never. If she had deceived me, I should have doubted the honour of an angel!”

“Did she,” said I, “ever tell you who she was? Did she, before you made a splice for life, ever tell you that a foremast-man, a Greenwich pensioner, was her uncle, and that her father—” Here I stopped short and looked at him; for I did not know if I was right to blow the gaff upon her.

“She told me,” said his honour, “every word about her unfortunate father and all your kindness to her; and, in order to prevent all mistakes, she was married to me under the name of Jane Tackle. I tell you, my good old friend, that when I confessed how much I loved her, she answered, that before she would make any remark upon the subject, I must read a paper she put into my hand; and in that paper was an extract from a newspaper, detailing the execution of her father; and in the envelope was written, that Jane Nelson—for so she was called—was the daughter of that unfortunate man. I loved her the more for her open-heartedness; and, so far from the paper cooling my love, I felt that one who would run the risk of losing such an alliance

by bringing forward such unfortunate facts, would adorn any situation of life, and that in her heart was every disposition to virtue. I married her, Ben, knowing this ; but I have since learned from her that her father left with you a confession of his former life, coupled, perhaps—for she only has guessed the contents—with some circumstances better forgotten for ever. This paper I want you to give me, in order that I may destroy it, and with it the record of her father's shame."

"I beg your honour's pardon," said I, "but I can't part with that paper. No man has seen the contents of it—it has never been in other hands but mine; and your lordship will know what value I ought to put upon this document by the mischief which has arisen out of it." And here I told him every particular of Tapes's death, and the unfortunate business of my having opened the seal.

"Ben," said his lordship, "I know you well enough, from all I have heard of your character, to believe every word that you have said; but I very much fear, that if the word-

ing of the will is so express as you mention, we have little chance of overthrowing the attorney: but it shall not be for the want of exertion, or the fear of expense, if we do not disappoint him. How much has Tapes left you?"

"I can't say, your honour," I replied, "for the lawyer never mentioned that; but he rubbed his hands and was overjoyed when he found the seal was broken, so that I anticipate there must be a good sum left. It's not for myself, my lord, that I care about this business, but it is for Susan and her daughter; for those two to be robbed by this rascal does hurt me; and when I think that I am the cause of even a doubt, it makes this poor old heart beat quicker, and wears out my old hull more than all the rollings and pitchings in the Bay of Biscay. Susan was once in better circumstances, my lord; and I thought that, after all the squalls had passed, she might run into port with a fair breeze and smooth water."

"Don't take it so much to heart—I will take care to send you down my solicitor. I will

bear all the expense; and, by way of keeping soul and body together until we meet again, take this money; it comes from a sailor to a sailor: and since that fellow has ceased to pay the fifty pounds, you will allow me to pay it, and anything more you may require."

"Come here, you two old sailors," said Jane; "we want a council of war held; but I am going to be president, and uncle Ben is the culprit."

We walked in, and Jane, Lord love her! to see her in our cottage, with a smile of contentment, taking Susan's hand in hers! I could not help saying, "Such a woman as your ladyship—" (she put her finger on my lips, and said, "Jane, if you please, uncle Ben,")—"deserves to be happy. I have heard the parson say, that a good heart and a quiet conscience carries with it its own reward in the cheerfulness and contentment of the mind; and surely, Jane, you must be happy, when every step of your life has been for the happiness of others."

"Ben," said she, "I shall have you ap-

pointed one of his lordship's chaplains; but you take a wrong view of the case in one respect: a youth of labour and toil, followed by an honourable old age, is the greatest blessing of life; and old Ben Brace may lay his head on his pillow, and be certain that a grateful niece will never forget what is due to her uncle, her protector, her friend. Now, come into court, prisoner. You are accused by your wife of a determination to disobey her wishes, and to remain in Greenwich, although you are possessed of certain monies sufficient for your honourable maintenance elsewhere. What say you to this charge?"

"Only this, Mrs. Honourable President," said I, "that I am guilty, and not guilty, of the charge. That I intend to die in Greenwich is true enough; for I never should be happy if I thought I was not to lie near old Tom. I buried him, your honour, the day before yesterday; and, with this money, you have given me, his last request shall be complied with: I'll place a tombstone,—no, that can't be right either,—a board cut like an

anchor ; and on it shall be painted, ‘ The seaman’s anchor is his hope aloft ! ’ ”

“ As for the other business,” said his lordship, “ I think we can dispose of that in due time : but we don’t get justice in England either without time or money. My solicitor will tell you what to do ; and when this gentleman—who is a partner of the one who claims the property—comes down, you will speak handsomely to him, and desire him to call upon me, mentioning that I have provided you with legal advice.—Come, Jane, the day gets on—we must be going. Ben knows where to find us ; and we will send the carriage for him and his wife to-morrow, and he shall dine with us, so as to get home betimes. So good-b’ye, uncle Ben ! ” said his lordship ; and after shaking my hand and Susan’s, they got into the carriage and drove off.

CHAPTER XI.

Oh, 'tis a day
Of jubilee, cajollery ;
A day we never saw before.

Tom Thumb.

“ BEN,” said Susan, when the carriage had driven off, “ I shall never be able to dine with a lord and a lady : I’m sure I shall make some mistake and be ridiculous. I hope that we shall be quite alone with them ; or perhaps it would be better if there were a great number, and then we might be overlooked.”

“ I don’t much think, Susan,” said I, “ that many men in the Greenwich uniform ever dined with the great Lords of the Admiralty ; but this good, I know, will come out of it,—it will teach those servants of his lordship to know an

honest man by the cut of his jib ; and also, that although the rigging of a ship may come from the dock-yard, and the hull be rather old and rusty for want of blacking the bends, yet it may be built of good stuff, and not to be despised. Look what a handful of money his lordship gave me, Susan ! and he promised to give me fifty pounds a-year ; so that, in spite of the lawyer, we have not gone to leeward on this tack ; and I begin to think we may weather the attorney, after all."

It was late when Mr. Kite came. I told him all about his lordship ; and this honest fellow said, " Why, Mr. Brace, I am sincerely glad you have some person on whom you can rely, who will see you through this business. I have looked at the will, and certainly, as far as I can judge, the case is much against you. It seems, the intention of the testator was to this effect,—that the money should be yours, subject to some regulations and restrictions of which it is useless now to speak, provided it was evident that even you could never have read the confession. And for this reason it is

mentioned that the seal being broken should be a sufficient evidence against you. I confess, at the moment I told you not to give up the document, I considered, and I do still consider the case desperate. You have, it appears, found a good friend in Lord Hennington, who is rich, and who will take care you have justice done you. I am an old sailor myself; and knowing the openness of a sailor's heart, I thought it was better that you should not surrender without a fight."

"And I'm blessed if I do, Mr. Kite! I'm obliged to you," said I, "and so is his lordship; and if I weather the point, I won't forget the pilot who showed me the passage through the shoals."

"Have you examined the document, Mr. Brace?"

"Not I, Mr. Kite; as you advised, so I did, —I placed it under all, in my chest; and that's safe and snug as a vessel in Dock-yard Creek at Malta."

"Since I cannot be of any further service to you, Mr. Brace," said he, "I shall wish you

good-b'ye. Yours is a hard case, but something may still turn up. I really wish you success, although, again I say, I despair of it. If I could see the document, I could speak more positively."

"That's what no man living will do, but the judge upon the Bench," said I. "His lordship wanted to see it; but I have promised and pledged my word, and I would not show it to the First Lord of the Admiralty himself. Many thanks to you, sir; you are an honest man, and that's more than I can say for the other man. There's my hand, sir, and God bless you!"

Well, he went away, and I went to bed; and I slept better for the prospect of being able to have a good stand-up fight before I was laid up in ordinary for ever. And the next morning, when I got to Susan, in came a long, sandy-haired fellow, with a small eye as bright as a fire-fly in Jamaica on a dark night. He inquired for me, and lugged out a note he had received the evening before from Lord Hennington.

“ I come, Mr. Brace,” he began, “ according to orders received last night, to inquire into this business, and see how far it is advisable to contest the matter. I have not been idle, I assure you, Mr. Brace ; I have seen the will, and now you must show me the document.”

“ Beg your pardon, sir ; but I shall do no such thing.”

“ But you must,” said he.

“ Must !” said I ; “ who can make me ? who can make a man break his word ? is there any law to make a man a rascal ?”

“ Plenty to save rascals, at any rate,” said the lawyer. “ But just consider : how can I advise you unless I know exactly how far you have committed yourself ? Tell me the whole story.”

Well, I spun him the yarn,—mentioned the name of the omnibus—the day it happened—the fight—the words of the cad—the name of the other omnibus—the scene at Hawk’s, and so on.

“ Did Hawk ever have the deed in his hand ?”

“ Indeed he had not,” said I, “ and never will.”

“ Well, then,” said he, “ it appears I can make no more of it at present than to inquire of the cad, and to send word to Hawk that he must apply to me for further information in the case. He will file a bill of discovery, I suppose ; but as Lord Hennington is resolved to contest the business to the last, I shall do all in my power to embarrass the proceedings. If anything more transpires, you will hear from me.” And away he went, leaving me more resolved than ever that no man living should see it.

About five o'clock up comes the carriage, and half the neighbourhood turned out to see it. Yesterday's business had given the idle a great desire to know who we were, and all manner of reports were in circulation : some declared Susan was the mother of Jane, who had been stolen in her youth by gipsies, and ultimately married a lord who fell in love with her beauty ; others said she was my daughter by a former wife ; but every one

knew of the kiss in the Hospital, and every blessed mother's son of them had seen the carriage. Now they beset the door, to see Susan, whom they remembered for years, placed in the carriage, and Ben Brace, the old pensioner, driven to London like a lord. I was glad of one thing; which was, that we had no fellows with cauliflower heads and long sticks, stuck up like painters on a grating over the ship's stern, — we had only the look-out man on the forecastle, and he was a jolly-looking fellow.

“ Now then, sir, if you please to get in, for I must be in town by six o'clock,” said he; and he opened the door.

“ Avaust heaving, shipmate,” said I; “ we never sail without ballast; and if we were to carry on without some of that inside lining, we should capsize if we stove in stays suddenly round a corner. But I see you don't understand me: this is it—we must freshen hawse before we start.”

“ What!” said he, “ want fresh horses? that is a good one! Why, do you suppose *my* cattle can't go eight miles without a change?”

“ Lord love you ! ” said I to Susan ; “ what precious fools these landsmen are ! Get him the bottle of brandy, and perhaps he will understand that, although it may be French. There,” says I, as I poured out a glass, and gave Susan the bottle to clap in the locker ; “ that’s as good as twenty horses,—swallow that, and then you will sail head to wind like a steam-boat. That’s well done ; and the next time you come this way, we will pipe to grog again. Now then heave and aweigh, my lad ! and take care how you weather the omnibuses : they are so long, that they shoot well ahead in stays ; and when they make a stern bound to pick up a passenger, they clap the cabin-door right athwart the road. Now mind your steerage, my fine fellow ! and if you want a signal-man aloft, I’m the man, for I’m used to the mast-head.”

Well, away we drove ; and as I was rather afraid of this galloping affair, I kept a good look-out from the cabin windows. “ Starboard a little,” said I, as we ran by the Elephant and Castle, or you’ll be aboard of some of this

convoy ;—port with all, my lad, or you 'll be athwart hawse of the turnpike gate.—There, steady now—that 's your sort ; steer right over the bridge, and take care you don't yaw us over the breastwork."

" A sailor adrift !" said one fellow. " You be d—d !" said I ; upon which a whole batch of boys followed the carriage, hallooing and shouting like mad ones. The horses being all fire and tow, set to work to run a race with them ; and as we luffed short round the corner to get into Parliament-street, we were nearly on our beam-ends. " Shorten sail, you precious cuckoo !" said I : " why, I'm blessed if the ship is not running away with us ! Bring her to the wind gently, and heave-to for a moment, if you can't reef topsails going before it."

Well, I must say this for the man at the wheel, that he steered beautifully : it was touch and go a dozen times, but that's a sign of a good pilot. He knew all the reaches fore and aft the great town ; and after getting us first on one tack, then on the other, until I began to think he was beating Tom Cox's traverse, or up

to a man-of-war's cruise, "There and back again," and just whilst Susan was getting on her pins to look out of the larboard quarter gallery window, he brings us up all standing, and smack goes Susan through the foremost bulk-head.

"Stopper there!" said I; meaning that the coachman should not veer any more cable, for he backed us a bit.

"Only let me out of this carriage," said Susan, "and I don't get into it again to please Lord Hennington, or the Lord Mayor either." And she puffed and blew like a wounded porpoise.

She was not damaged about the figure-head at all; so, after giving her rigging a shake down, and lifting her cap from her mast-head to feel if any of the lashings aloft had given way, we walked into the house. I told you some time ago of Nelson's dinner in Austria, where there were a hundred grenadiers in attendance; but now we had to steer through lots of these fellows, who were squinting, and chirruping as if they had swallowed a flock of sparrows.

“What name, sir?” said a chap all gold and gammon, like a dying dolphin.

“Name!” said I; “Ben Brace, to be sure, who belonged to the *Agamemnon*,—and she was a fine ship in her day.”

Well, what does this fellow do, but he hails another man in the main-top, for we were going up the rigging step by step, and says he, in a voice that would startle a boatswain, “Ben Brace and Mr. *Agamemnon*!” After puffing a little, for I was not used to mount a reeve in this style, we found the man who had been hailed; and when we came nearly alongside, he opens the sliding gunter doors, and bellows like a bull—“Sir Ben Brace and Mr. *Agamemnon*!—Shall I take your hat and stick, sir?” said he to me, looking, Lord love you! as if butter wouldn’t melt in his mouth.

“Thank you, shipmate,” said I, “but I never part company with my kit.”

“I beg your pardon, my lord,” says I, as I hove in sight; for there was the lord, and Jane, and two other ladies, and the attorney who had been down to Greenwich: so I whipped off my

gold-laced scraper, and made a bow, whilst Susan stood shaking like a sick canary in a cage. Jane came forward and took her by the hand kindly, and led her to the fireplace, and told her the names of the other two, who exchanged numbers with her, and showed their colours ; whilst Lord Hennington, after giving her a hail, passed on to me, and said, " Brace, my old fellow, I'm glad to see you ! And, ladies, let me present you to as gallant a fellow as ever sailed salt water, and who was the constant follower of Nelson."

Well, after this I walked up to the ladies, having clapped my hat and stick under my arm ; and as I leaned forward a bit, to take hold of their dear little flippers, I lifted my leg and caught the attorney just above the shin, and set him polishing his leg with both hands. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Lawyer," says I ; and as I turned round, not knowing that I had not room to swing clear of other craft in the anchorage, the end of my stick caught a smelling-bottle which was on a table, and off that goes smack over a lady's dress.

“Let me take your hat and stick,” said his lordship kindly; “for although I’m a sailor and used to these roadsteads, yet such is the fashion of blocking up the rooms now with furniture, that I can hardly steer through these shoals without running aground.”

Well, I handed him the things, and then I looked round to see what mischief I had done. But it so happened, that although I sent the glass spinning along the table and lodged it safe in the lady’s lap, it never broke, so there was no harm; and both of the dear creatures smiled and looked so kind-hearted like, that I looked at them—and “Lord bless you both!” said I, “but you ought to be the wives of any officer in the navy.”

“That ’s something like a compliment, Ben,” said Jane. “Come here now and sit by me. Now don’t you think you would be much better in a nice house in London than in Greenwich Hospital?”

“Certainly not, Jane,” said I. “It ’s all well enough for you to come to an anchor here; but for a sailor there’s no place like Greenwich.

It's of no use my old woman, who sits there looking at those fine glasses a dingle-dangling from the mast-head of the room, making you ask me, Jane, to cut and run from Greenwich reach: I'm a sailor in heart and soul, and I would rather lie amongst those who will all understand how to go aloft, than find myself by the side of some fat old woman who will be squabbling about her legs and arms. I'll give up any point but this; and as it refers to a time when I shall be dead and gone, I think she may as well give it up."

"Well, well," said Jane, "uncle Ben, we will say no more about it at present. But I forgot to introduce you to your two cousins, who were as anxious to see you as they would have been to have seen Nelson. Luckily for you, the bottle did not break, or you would have been obliged to make them both presents of new dresses."

All hands now began to talk away like a set of seamen on the fore-castle playing goose, excepting Susan, who kept overhauling the rigging of the room, and rolling her eyes about

at every object ; then she pumped up a deep sigh, and said, “ Dear, dear, how fine ! ” whilst my lord was patting the flipper of one cousin, and the lawyer was whispering to the other, and Jane was blowing the same breeze down Greenwich reach about me ; when in comes the gentleman who had opened the door, and sings out, “ Dinner is ready, my lady.”

“ Now, Brace,” said his lordship, “ offer your arm to that lady,” pointing to my cousin, “ and follow me down stairs.” In the mean time he held out his arm to Susan, who dropped him a curtsey, and he very good-naturedly took her in tow, and steered away.

Well, I did as I was ordered ; I clapped my arm akimbo, and says I, “ By your leave, my lady ; ” whilst I saw the attorney range up alongside of my other cousin : so I hove to. “ Avaust there ! ” says I, “ this will never do ; why, there ’s one of the convoy without a tow-rope.” So I hails Jane, and offers her the sleeve of my right arm. Then the lawyer got bowing for us to go foremost ; but I did not like to push on before my betters, so says I, “ Heave

ahead, your honour, and save the tide, whilst I bring up the rear with these two crafts."

Well, we made sail; and when we got down stairs, I saw the two chaps with cauliflower heads who had jeered me at Greenwich: they bowed their heads as we passed. "Ah," said I, "my lads, you 're precious civil when you can't help yourselves; but I 'm blessed if I 've forgotten the other day!" I was going to give them a spice of my mind, when Jane hauled a little on the sleeve, and says I, "Beg your pardon, Jane, but I was only going to shake hands with them to make up old quarrels: I 'never let the sun go down upon my anger.'"

Well, we took up our different stations. I was placed on the starboard side of Jane, and Susan was on the starboard side of his lordship, so that we could see each other. The lawyer was opposite me, and I saw him watching me as if he thought I should make a main-sail haul of the silver forks; so that, whilst I was overhauling the position of the squadron, I forgot to watch their movements. The cauliflower heads began to bustle about with

plates, and his lordship began to bale out the soup from a large silver kid; and when one of the men brought the cat-lap to me, I saw a kind of a cloth in my plate, which I clapped into my coat pocket. Jane saw it, and smiled; and she looked at the servant, as much as to say, 'Mind your own business,' which I was precious near putting into English for her.

"Never mind old Ben, my aunt Susan," said his lordship, as he saw her watching my proceedings; "let him keep a look-out at his end of the table, and we will have a glass of wine at ours."

"Come, Ben," said Jane, "is this all the attention you pay me?—ask me directly to have some wine with you, and I'll say yes, and get your cousin Lucy to join us. Come, Ben, my dear old uncle, may you have good health, and I dare say you wish me the same."

"That I do, Jane, and with all my heart. If all women were like you, I'm thinking they would be the admirals, and we under command: any man might lower his flag before the fire of such eyes, and——"

“Stopper, stopper!” said Jane, as his lordship sometimes says: “why, you will make all the women in love with you, if you pay such compliments. Come, let me send you some fish.”

“Do allow me,” said the lawyer, whose name was Marshall; and he began to serve out the fish.

“I’d a volunteered, Jane,” said I, “but I’ve only one fin.”

“I know it, Ben,” said Jane; “like all good seamen, you are always ready to serve the ladies: but tell me, Ben, how do you like your old captain as governor of Greenwich?”

“How! why I could kiss the ground he walks upon. Whenever I see him, I think of Nelson; and there is no man alive more fit to have such honourable retirement than Sir Thomas. Every blessed one of us likes him, and I’d walk half-a-mile any day to hear him say, ‘Ah, Brace, how do you do? better place this Greenwich than the bay in a gale.’ Then he is always ready to hear us, and we look up to him with the respect which a brave man deserves.”

“Ben,” said his lordship, “that is what one

delights to hear, when the old officer carries to his grave the respect and regard of the seamen. Fill Mr. Brace's glass." And he nodded to me, with a smile on his countenance ; and I stood up and said, " Your honour's health, and long life to you !"

I got ahead pretty well at dinner, though poor Susan could not eat a bit—no, although his lordship tried all he could to make her laugh and feel comfortable: she got down a little wine, but she was like a craft without a rudder—she did not know how to steer. But I did not feel so awkward as I thought I should in such company ; and if we could have got rid of those cauliflower rascals, who kept giggling and grinning at each other as if they expected to see a baboon at breakfast, I should have felt pretty well at ease. Blind as I was, I could see their impertinence ; and I could likewise detect the kind manner with which his lordship or Jane interfered if we were getting adrift in conversation.

At last we got our provisions on board, and the wine was coming alongside, when they put

before each of us a large round glass, and I saw everybody clap lips to it first, and then dabble fingers about in it; and I thought it a precious dirty trick: — however, thinks I, “I’ll just take a sip:” and when I found it was water, and that half warm enough to make a hog ill, “I beg your pardon, sir,” says I, to the gentleman who put it down; “but, if it’s all the same to you, I prefer grog.”

Well, very soon after, they cleared away the decks and made a sweep of the cloth; but I’m blessed if they had not got another one underneath! and I began to say to his lordship as I touched the spare canvass, “There shall be no wasteful expense of any powder, shot, arms, ammunition, or other stores — and I think your lordship ought to be brought to a court-martial for this, for it’s in direct defiance of the articles of war.”

But Jane whips her oar in, and says she, “It’s the fashion, Ben; and we must follow the fashion, you know.”

“That’s a queer fashion enough,” said I. “I have often heard of fashion, but I never could understand it yet.”

“Why,” said his lordship, “Fashion is doing that which a particular class of people choose to do; but I can best explain it by your own coat: that is cut in the Greenwich fashion, mine is cut in the London style; and I should be just as much out of fashion with my round hat at the Hospital, as you would be with your three-cornered scraper in Bond-street. Now do you understand it?”

“Yes, your honour: it’s all the same as if the great people swore the moon was made of green cheese; then it would be the fashion to believe it.”

“Just so, Ben. Now, take some wine; and although it’s not the fashion, yet it’s a good old custom.”

“Here is the blessing of a grateful heart,” said Jane, “upon you! And remember, Ben,” she continued, as she took my hand, “happen what may with the lawsuit, you shall never want, and your wife never shall want. Now, as I know Mr. Marshall, Lord Hennington, and yourself are to talk over some business, we ladies will go upstairs and leave you to your

council." So saying, she got under weigh; and all the women did the same.

"Now," said his lordship, as he came to the chair in which Jane had been seated,—“Now, Mr. Marshall, let us hear what you propose shall be done in this case. I believe I have already fully explained myself to you: I feel confident that Brace has never read a word of this twopenny confession, and therefore I feel more annoyed, that by the accident of his having sealed his envelope exactly over the enclosure, the circumstance should have arisen by which he is likely to be defrauded of his money. I repeat, as to the money, it is not of great moment, because I shall take care an ample sufficiency shall be settled upon Brace, and his wife after him; but I see no reason why we should give up this money without a struggle: something may always turn up; and a clever counsel never considers the justice of the case as long as he can serve his client. In the first place, Mr. Marshall, what is the amount left?”

“I beg your pardon, my lord,” said I, just

cutting out the lawyer, who was clearing his pipes for a yarn by washing down the cobwebs of his throat, “but I am ashamed to give your lordship this trouble about a poor old Greenwich pensioner. I have seen Jane again; I have seen her married to a captain in the navy; I have seen her the same kind, affectionate, warm-hearted woman she once was as a child;—now I’m happy!—all the doubloons on board of a galleon would not make me happier than I am at this moment; and, therefore, I don’t wish your lordship to spend your money for me, when I am as rich as I care to be.”

“That’s all very well, my good old fellow,” said Lord Hennington; “but you forget one very material point,—which is, the interest of your wife, and her daughter after her. You are snug moored; but, Ben, you may die: although you have weathered many a breeze, a squall may come which will swamp you; you must not expect to ride out every gale, Ben: and then your wife and daughter would, without some assistance, be reduced to poverty.

Now, this money, I am convinced, is honourably yours, although an accident seems likely to deprive you of it; why, therefore, think of giving up a right, when by a little exertion we *may* maintain it? In point of fact, I am resolved to use my utmost endeavours; so, for the present, old boy, hold your tongue, and let Mr. Marshall and myself settle it.—How much did you say was left?”

“There is no less a sum than four hundred pounds a-year: the principal is held in trust for the present; but in the event of Mr. Brace’s daughter—whose name, I believe, is Tapes”—(I nodded an affirmative, for the gentleman looked at me)—“being married, the trust, after the death of Mr. Brace and his wife, will be given up to the husband of the daughter. Pray how old is she, Mr. Brace?”

“About thirty, your honour,” said I: “she was an infant when old Tapes died. She has a clean run fore and aft; and although she has light hair, is a wonderful fine young woman, with a good figure-head and a capital build.”

“Why, Ben,” said his lordship, “you describe your daughter as you would a ship !”

“Certainly, my lord,” said I ; “ain’t they both alike ?—haven’t they caps and bonnets, stays, rings, stem and sternpost, all the same as a frigate ?”

“Well, Mr. Marshall, what do you propose ?”

“Why, my lord, I have given this case, knowing your lordship’s anxiety about it, a most patient consideration. I have procured copies of the will, and I have on my own responsibility taken counsel’s opinion upon the case, as far as I could state it,—not having seen the paper in Mr. Brace’s possession, and which he seems determined not to show.”

“Nor ever will,” says I, “but to the judge upon the bench : no, not even to his lordship. If I go to my grave knowing that no mortal man has ever held that paper in his hands but myself, then I know that Tackle’s last wishes have been complied with, and I shall close my eyes without a groan.”

“You see, my lord, that I was obliged to

propose the questions to counsel, founded on the supposition that the seal was removed partially ; and, for all we know, the letter may at this moment be closed sufficiently to establish our case. The answers to the queries I have brought with me, and here they are:—‘ I am of opinion, that if the seal is totally removed, a successful defence of the point would be impossible, the words of the will being so very explicit : on the contrary, although the seal may be damaged, and even broken, yet if it can be shown that the letter is in that state so as to render its having been opened impossible, or most highly improbable, I am of opinion that the action may be safely maintained.’ Here is the paper, my lord, with the extracts of the will ; and now you are as much in possession of the case as I am.”

“ I’m blessed,” said I, as I gave the table a crack with my hand, which set bottles and glasses, plates and dishes, a-dancing, “ if I don’t think that the paper is all fast by a piece of the inside lining ! but I won’t touch it again to look—not for the universal world.”

“What reason have you for thinking so, old boy?” said his lordship.

“Why, your honour, because when I saw what I had done, I gave the outside part a bit of a lift with a light hand, and it did not come open.”

“Then, Mr. Brace,” said Mr. Marshall, “will you send me the paper enclosed and sealed any way you like? — only take care not to put the seal again over the enclosed one, in order that I may have it ready to produce in court.”

“I could have saved your honour,” said I, “half the question, by saying that I will produce it myself, and no man breathing but the judge shall handle it.”

“I have some kind of feeling, Mr. Marshall,” said his lordship, “that all this will come right after all: it is but a slender hope that Brace has given us, yet to that hope I will cling. You will, therefore, take it for granted that I intend to combat this business, and I wish to know how you propose to proceed. I see well enough that we must work in the

dark, for old Ben is determined not to let us go on to a certainty. Now, Ben, couldn't you bring the letter here and let me see it? we will just look and try if we can proceed with hope or not."

"No, my lord," said I, standing up: "I never told but one lie to a living man, and I'll keep my word with the dead."

"Freshen hawse, Ben," said his lordship, as he shook my hand: "I honour your feeling, and I shall not again ask you to alter your determination. You must proceed, Mr. Marshall, according to the regular plan."

"Then, my lord, I shall give notice to the trustees to pay the interest to Mr. Brace tomorrow, for it became due yesterday. They will refuse unless the document is produced, and we will then bring an action against them in the Common Pleas, in order to enforce the payment; we can avoid the Chancery Court altogether by getting an order to have the case tried in the Pleas; and they will be glad enough to meet our wishes, as they think they are sure of their cause, and therefore will willingly avoid delays and expenses."

“ So let it be then. And now, Brace, a bumper to the success of your law-suit ; and I have this consolation for you to take to bed with you,—that the more desperate your case is, the more likely you are to succeed : we’ll fight them openly and honourably like seamen ; and if you are beaten, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have done your duty by your wife and her daughter, and that you will never be worse off than you are at present ; but, on the contrary, that your wife and daughter shall be under my protection. If you require any more shot in your lockers, old Ben, you will apply to Mr. Marshall, and he will keep the racks full.—And now, having settled our plans of operation, let’s keep our spirits up a little, and hope for the best. How do you like the wine, old boy ?” said his lordship, as he caught me by the hand ; “ and just tell us a little what you do with yourself at Greenwich from daylight to dark.”

“ That’s easily answered, my lord,” said I, “ for I do nothing, and the rest help me. We

sometimes spin our yarns ; but I believe I have run all mine off the reel ; so, like a midshipman in war time, I turn my clothes-bag end for end, and begin again. We have most of us got short memories for the present time ; although we remember years and years ago, with the dates of the actions and the names of the officers, as well as ever."

"Are there many older than yourself, Mr. Brace?" said Mr. Marshall.

"Not many, sir," said I : "we old sailors don't live so long as the soldiers at Chelsea ; for, generally speaking, we have more of our spars shot away, and we have had more of the wear and tear of active life ; besides which, I believe what Sir William said, that the spirits we take on board when we first go to sea burn us up a bit, is true. But, with all that, here am I, the last of the Agamemnons, excepting my wife, and she got christened to-day by his lordship's servant."

"We can manage another bottle, Ben," said his lordship.

"For the matter of that, my lord, it's not a

bottle of black strap, which I take this to be, that will make me sail by the head; and if so be that his honour over the way there is inclined for a booze, I'm young enough yet to crack a dozen, and yet see a hole through a grating."

"Ben," said his lordship, "you ought to write your life."

"Lord bless your honour!" said I, "ever since I learnt to write to Susan—which is many a year now past and gone—I have kept a regular log; ay, even now day after day I add it up; and every now and then I take a general overhaul of it. I've thought of that, my lord, for I have seen dangers and troubles enough; besides which, I have tacked on some of old Tom's yarns. And the other day, when I was sunning myself like a turtle on a calm day, I came athwart a navy man who had come down to see the Hospital. As he seemed to know the jib-halyards from the spanker-boom, I got unlaying my memory a bit; when an old chap told me that the officer was an author, and that it was a pity that old Brace, who had seen so much service, should only be remembered

when any one looked at the Hospital books. So I made up to him, my lord, and I asked him to look at the log and see what he could make of it. He has got the first part of it now; and as I go on from day to day, I send it to him.—But I beg your honour's pardon, I hope you won't think it wrong of me if I ask liberty to return to Greenwich: Susan is rather afraid like, and I should like to get her into harbour before dark."

"Well, then," said his lordship, "let us go upstairs, Mr. Marshall, and have some coffee." And away we went.

After we had taken coffee, and talked a little while longer, "Come, Susan, my girl," said I, "we must heave and aweigh."

"Is the carriage here?" said Jane to one of the land-lubbers.

"Yes, my lady," said the fellow. So I shook hands with all hands, and kissed Jane, bless her!—ay, over and over again—for she was a woman with her heart in the right place.

"I shall come and see you often," said she; "and, as you will be obliged to call at Mr.

Marshall's, in your way do not forget St. James's Square. Good-b'ye, Susan! the carriage will take you safely home."

"I beg your ladyship's pardon," said Susan, "but I would sooner walk, or go in an omnibus, than go so fast back as I came up."

"That's nothing at all, Susan," said his lordship; "sailors always like fast-sailing ships, and Ben would have gone mad if every vessel on the road had run past him. Make her mind easy, Ben: the coachman is as good a one as ever steered a vessel upon wheels; he will take you safely enough; and if you're inclined to crack on her, she'll walk along in good style. So good night to you, Ben! and I look forward with some hope, as I told you before, to our defeating Mr. Hawk, after all. You will hear from me again soon; so, once more, good night!"

I shook him by the hand as he held out his. I could have said what I felt, for it was uppermost in my heart, and what is there soon finds its way to the lips — else how is it that when the marines and afterguard are hauling away

at the weather fore-topsail brace and the yard does not budge an inch, the officer of the watch lets out a volley of curses heavy enough to knock down the front line of a regular army?—he has not to look for his words, —it goes to his heart to see the duty so badly done, and his mouth is ready to bear witness to his feelings.

“I say, coachman,” says I, as I clapped my head out of the starboard window, “don’t you think we had better take a glass to our safe cruise, and our certainty of making the land? And listen, my lad: you wear a cocked hat as well as myself, and I dare say you will have no objection to my coming on the quarter-deck; for I’m blessed if ever I liked being a cabin passenger: so heave to, and let me get aloft. Can’t you haul up alongside of a public-house?”

“Ay, ay, sir,” as you gentlemen say on board a ship; and he cracks on all sail, runs down to the bridge, whips over it in the shaking of a handspike, and comes to an anchor alongside of a gin-palace on the other side.

“Ben,” said Susan, “remember how kind the lord and the lady have been, and how careful we ought to be not to offend them. It’s true, Jane is your niece; but she is so much above us in life, that if through anything we gave the coachman any accident should happen to the carriage, they might think, and with good reason, that we ought to be contented with their arrangements, without any alteration on our part. Believe me, Ben, you had better remain where you are; and after the coachman has taken us safe, then you can give him some liquor.”

“Why, Susan,” said I, “you are afraid of a capsizing! These gentlemen are not like waisters in a large ship, always dirty and always near the grog-tub; it’s only now and then that they bouse their jibs up: and surely, if the gentleman drives us in a lord’s carriage, we ought to give him something to keep the cold out of his stomach.”

“Nonsense, my dear!” said Susan: “at any rate, I don’t think Lord Hennington would like his carriage to be stopping for half-an-hour at a gin-palace.”

At this moment the door was opened, and I walked out. "I shall stand the shot, my hearty," said I ; and I own I felt more at home when I got to the tap than I did at St. James's Square. To be sure, I thought afterwards that his lordship's black strap might have been a little too heavy for me ; for when I had turned down a couple of glasses and got on the box of the coach in the air, I every now and then thought I saw two coaches instead of one. The coachman was only a sheet or two in the wind, neither drunk nor sober, but cherry merrry ; and much it pleased Susan to find herself safe and sound, and with her old boy safe also, notwithstanding we had steered rather wild on the way.

CHAPTER XII.

“ My timbers ! what lingo he ’d coil and belay !

Why, ’twas just all as one as high Dutch.”

Sea Song.

“ SPLICE the main brace, my hearty,” said I, “ before you take a fresh departure : it’s rather dark, and you had better steer small when you get near the bridge. There gives us your flipper ! I suppose you know the course and distance to be run before you heave to ?”

“ Why,—y—y—yes, admiral,” said the coachman, who was now unfit to muster at quarters, and was getting every moment worse ; “ of course I know the distance. So good night, old woman !” and he slewed the carriage end for end, and started off at a furious pace.

“ I would rather lose the law-suit than any accident should happen to that carriage,” said Susan : “ but we are safe, thank God ! and if he runs against anything, we are not there to share in the blame.”

“ Nonsense, ma'am ! ” said I. “ Now tell me, Susan, how would you like to be a fine lady like Jane,—to have carriages and horses—all those servants—that house,—in short, to be the wife of a lord ? ”

“ As true, Ben, as I live, I would rather be your wife. There—you need not smother me with kisses ! The great and the fine have thousands of ailments to which we are strangers. It's true they blaze for a short time, and then they die : we have great hardships to encounter, and die also ; but it is labour and employment which weary us into sleep, and we sleep soundly—we have few cares even for the morrow, and we are happier in our state than they are in their theirs.”

“ There's something in that, Susan ; for many a time, after a hard day's work, I have been to my hammock and slept like a top, whilst Nelson,

who had all the charge, was restless and unquiet : he knew the danger, I did not. I slept because I was tired ; he was tired more in mind than I was in body, and yet he never closed his eyes the whole blessed night during the heavy gale in the Gulf of Lyons. So I suppose you are right : if we are contented here, we need envy no one."

"No, Ben, but we may feel grateful for a kindness."

"A kindness !" said I ; "there is not in this world a kinder-hearted girl than Jane ! How many thousands are there, who would have been ashamed to know even an honest old seaman—to have owned a pensioner in Greenwich for a relation ; and who, if they had given charity to one of their own kin, would have treated them like beggars—have chucked the money over the lee quarter, and left the half-sinking craft to have borne up and picked it up the best way she could, and then have made sail, showing the colours when far enough off, to make them sensible to whom they owed the obligation, whilst they dreaded being near enough to be

thanked even for their charity, if charity it can be called which is ashamed of its own act. When a woman is grateful, Susan, she does not do her work by halves ; she is heart and soul in the cause, and it is not a trifle which will turn her from her course.

“Ah,” continued I, “Lord love you all ! dear you are to men in health—kind to men in sickness—always ready to serve the sorrowful and support the afflicted ! I tell you, dame, if the law had allowed it, I, being so fond of you all, would have married every blessed one of you : I’d rather see the flutter of a petticoat in a breeze than all the Flushing jackets in Europe. Good night, Susan ; I must be off ! and when I lie down to-night, I shall almost bless Tackle for having left such a creature as Jane behind him.”

The next morning, Tom’s gravestone was all cut, and dried, and painted, and stuck up, when I took an overhaul at the anchorage. When I afterwards walked away to Susan’s—there she was all flutter and tremble like a leaf in a breeze.

“ I told you how it would be ! ” she began ;
“ I told you, Ben ! — the lord’s carriage was upset, and the coachman has broken his arm ; he was thrown nearly over the bridge.”

“ And serve him quite right too ! ” said I :
“ what business has the captain to leave the wreck the instant he runs on shore ? His lordship’s a sailor ; he knows we were relieved from our watch—he can’t bring us to a court-martial because the master he placed in charge as pilot, did not know his navigation. To be sure, I think it would have puzzled him to have taken an observation, for he would have seen so many stars that he never would have shot the right one. Any more news ? ”

“ No, my dear,” said Susan ; “ excepting that Mr. Kite was down here all yesterday a-courting my daughter.”

“ Oh, oh ! ” said I ; “ is that the way the land’s lying ? I can see how the cat is jumping, just as plainly as I used to see the white patch in a reefer’s weekly account.”

“ He seems,” continued Susan, “ very anxious to see the paper.”

“No doubt he does, and to make sure of the dollars before he boards the craft. We shall see, Susan,—we shall see.” And away I went with a light heart, making sure that Kite thought I had a chance of success, or he would not have come cruising in our waters.

Well, weeks passed and little was done, until the beginning of June, when I was told that the action was to be fought on the 4th of June : I would rather it had been on the 1st of the month, for a good reason ; for that was as fine a victory, with the exception of the Nile and Trafalgar, as the English navy can boast of. I was told I was to bring the paper ; and accordingly I was in St. James’s Square by eight o’clock in the morning, having wrapped up the thing in my silk handkerchief, and stowed it away right over my heart : I thought I could keep it pretty safe there. Jane was up, and all kindness as usual : I breakfasted with her, and in my Greenwich uniform made my appearance, with Lord Hennington and Mr. Marshall, at the Court of Common Pleas.

We were placed between the judge and the

talking lawyers; and shortly after nine o'clock, in came his lordship. He was a little man, about the size of Nelson; with a thoughtful countenance, and a heaviness about his eyes, as if all his brains were crowding down upon them. I took a good look at him: he seemed a kind-hearted man, and Mr. Marshall said he was as good a judge of a case as Nelson was of a ship. "Well, said I, "if it's all fair and above-board, I have no fears."

At the further end of the table I saw Hawk, with a roll of papers, talking to a little snub-nosed fat fellow, who seemed very attentive to him; whilst a man who sat just before the judge mustered twelve men into a kind of box, and made them take an oath. When this was done, up jumped a chap in a wig, who said something about its being a case between Benjamin Brace, John Hawk, and others; and he said that issue was joined, and sat down. Then up jumps the gentleman to whom Lord Hennington had been speaking, and he spoke to this effect.—But before he began there was a cry of "Silence, silence!"—so says I to Marshall,

“Is he going to talk for me?” and he said, “Yes; he is a celebrated counsel, who will, if possible, make the worse appear the better cause; for if the seal is broken, Mr. Brace, as I told you before, your case is desperate.”

“May it please your lordship,” he began; “gentlemen of the jury, my learned friend who has opened the case has informed you who is the plaintiff and who the defendant in this action; and I believe I may say, that in all my professional experience I have never had a harder task devolve upon me than the cause in which I am now engaged. Gentlemen, it will require but few words to place you in full possession of the circumstances connected with this case; it will be unnecessary to call more than one witness to identify the plaintiff; and therefore I trust that you will be detained but a very short time before your verdict is returned.

“It may be in your remembrance that in 1797 a murder was committed by one John Tackle on the person of Jane Brace, a fisherman’s daughter at the village of Cawsand,—the

murdered girl being the sister of the plaintiff. I will not harrow your feelings, gentlemen, by painting in vivid colours all the atrocities of that night; let it be sufficient to state that this poor girl was the victim, first, of her murderer's appetite. There are, however, one or two circumstances which it will be my painful duty to lay before you, although I doubt much if the length of time now elapsed has obliterated them from the memory of the public. At the coroner's inquest held on the body of this unfortunate girl, it was given in evidence that this John Tackle, being a smuggler——"

"Avaust heaving there, sir!" said I; but Mr. Marshall pulled me back, and the judge pointed at me, and, clapping on his quarter-deck look, said, "Silence, sir, or I shall order you out of court!" So I clapped my hand to my hair, and says I, "Certainly, my lord." Well, the lawyer leaned over and said, "My good old friend, don't interrupt me; I will do my best."—"I'll take care of him," said Lord Hennington.

"Gentlemen, I said this Tackle was a smuggler. He had decoyed the plaintiff, who was

then under the name of Fearnay, (and you know, gentlemen, sailors change their names as often as play-actors,) to take a passage from London to Cawsand on board the *Nancy*, a vessel, from her peculiar build and description, admirably adapted for the business : she was a schooner——”

“A sloop, your honour,” said I.

“Thank you, sir,” he continued ; “a sloop then, of so careless a rig, that no one would suspect her of being employed in a contraband trade, but of a build which enabled her to sail so fast that few could have caught her. When this Tackle, who commanded her, had got through the Downs on his passage to the Eddystone Lighthouse, off which he was to fall in with a vessel from Guernsey, having smuggled articles on board, and which cargo Tackle was to run, he made attempts to lure the plaintiff into the same course of life which he himself pursued, and he used all those arguments best calculated to ensure his success : for at that time, gentlemen, the plaintiff was young in years, of a robust health, active, intelligent,

and, from the various actions in which he had fought, every way calculated to face any danger, or to forward any desperate enterprise. With the true spirit of a British seaman, however, he refused so base, so unworthy an employment. Tackle, still thinking he might succeed in entrapping him, did not put into execution the design he harboured ; but when he fell in with his coadjutors, one Jacob, it was resolved to keep Fearnay a prisoner, for fear of his betraying the secret now in his power, and thus leading to the detection and apprehension of Tackle.

“ During the time the crew of the smugglers were employed running the cargo, the plaintiff slipped overboard and effected his escape, and hastened to the abode of his parents, at the windows of which he saw Tackle listening and looking. I must here, gentlemen, put you in possession of another fact ; which is, that during Fearnay’s trip in the *Nancy*, her captain, when in a state of intoxication, had recounted the seduction of Fearnay’s sister, and it was evident, from the situation in which he was found,

that he had intentions of continuing, not only his illicit trade, but his illicit connexion. A scuffle ensued between the parties: the sister, hearing the noise, and recognizing the voices, that of her brother, and that of the man she most loved, rushed out of the house; and Tackle, in order to effect his escape, pointed a pistol at the plaintiff: his sister rushed forward to seize the weapon, and received its contents and died.

“It is requisite, gentlemen of the jury, for me to dwell upon this subject a little; for although apparently of no connexion with the cause, you will find it to prove the strong integrity of the plaintiff. Gentlemen, I blush to say, an attorney was concerned with the smugglers; and he was the first husband of the plaintiff’s wife. That man was named Tapes; and he had a brother of the same name, and, I fear, of the same calling, inasmuch as Tackle had been employed by both of them; the latter residing at Exeter, and carrying on the trade of a wine and spirit merchant in that city. There cannot be a shadow of a doubt but that Tapes

of Cawsand assisted at the smuggling of these goods, and passed them on to his brother. Gentlemen, Tapes of Cawsand was convicted before a jury of smuggling ; indeed, the goods were found in an old bakehouse, the property of his wife before his marriage, and then and at that time actually in possession of Tapes. Tackle effected his escape, but Tapes was sentenced to serve on board a man-of-war for ten years : he was taken ill on board of the Hulks, and died there, leaving a wife and four children. At this moment, when starvation stared the hopeless family in the face — ay, gentlemen, when hope had withdrawn its last rays ;—and you know, gentlemen, how long hope will last, even in the most desperate of cases ; for we have known the felon, even with the rope about his neck and the cap drawn over his face, still cling to hope, and express his belief that he's to be pardoned even when the bolt is half drawn ;—at that moment, gentlemen, this gallant straightforward English sailor — I can give him no higher character than that he was the follower of the immortal Nelson — stepped

forward: he offered all he possessed to the widow of that man through whose evil ways he had lost his only sister; he not only gave with seamanlike liberality his last farthing, but he married her, and restored her to an honourable life. Gentlemen, by his exertions he supported his wife and Tapes's children. Death made fearful havock in the family; for I find in my brief, that, after the battle of Trafalgar, three of the four had died, leaving only one, a daughter, and who is mainly interested in this cause.

“Gentlemen, I now come to the most important part of this case, and to which I must beg your undivided attention. In 1801, you well remember that Lord Nelson made an attack on the flotilla off Boulogne——”

“I beg your pardon, your honour,” said I, “but Nelson did not go himself.” I got as far as this, when his lordship hauled me down,—for I jumped up when I began to speak.

“No matter, my gallant fellow,” continued the lawyer, whose lungs must have been made of air-pumps, for he never took breath. “Gen-

tlemen, you doubtless are well informed of the circumstance to which I allude. It was during the attack made upon that flotilla by the boats of the English squadron, that an Englishman was taken in arms against his countrymen, and was made prisoner. He was passed round the fleet and recognised as having deserted from the Isis, and was soon known, notwithstanding his false name, to be no other than Tackle. He was tried at a court-martial, sentenced to death, and executed. But, gentlemen of the jury, whilst a prisoner awaiting his trial, he was discovered by the plaintiff; he was visited by him, he was encouraged by him; and when life had lost all its charms, and when death itself seemed desirable, the plaintiff reminded him that the daughter, the fruit of that unhappy connexion with his murdered sister, still lived:—it was the link in that chain of events which bound him strongly to existence, and with his last breath he consigned that child to this gallant fellow's charge. In that awful moment Tackle sought to make amends for his past life; and, having learned from the plaintiff that Tapes of Exeter

did not contribute to the support of his brother's children, and left his own sister-in-law on the scanty subsistence earned by a foremast seaman, gave into Mr. Brace's hand a paper, and when he gave it to him said, ' Tell Tapes I have given you this paper ; that it is a confession of all acts connected with my life ; that in the event of his making you an allowance, which he can well afford, you will never open it, or read one word of it ; but that you hold it secret as long as he continues to pay : with his discontinuance I absolve you from the oath I now exact of you,—' Never, so help you God, to read it, or to allow any other to read it.'

“ Gentlemen, after the execution of Tackle, the plaintiff appeared before Mr. Tapes, and in consequence of what passed at that interview the sum of fifty pounds annually was paid until Mr. Tapes's death, which occurred early in the present year. I am aware that this last part will be distorted with the usual ability of my learned opponent ; but you, gentlemen of the jury, as fathers of families, as citizens of

the world, will place a proper construction on what I have said. It surely was the bounden duty of this man to have sheltered and supported his brother's children; for who could have a greater claim upon his affection and his ill-gotten affluence than the children of his own brother, in whose veins his own blood may be said to circulate?

“Gentlemen of the jury, I now come to the last part requisite to imprint on your minds. By the will of the late Mr. Tapes, a sworn copy of which will be produced to you, you will perceive that he has left the sum of five hundred pounds a-year to Susan Brace and her husband during the term of their natural lives, at the expiration of which the property is to descend to the daughter; and in the event of her dying unmarried, the whole to revert to Mr. Hawk, the defendant in this action; for he is not only the inheritor in reversion, but he is also trustee in conjunction with others. Now, gentlemen of the jury, this action is brought to enforce the payment of the first dividends, which have become due in

April last, and which the trustees refuse to pay, until this confession, to which I have before alluded, should be produced in court. There is a clause in the will which is to this effect: that if any suspicion should arise as to the *probability* of this confession having been read, the whole sum should at once become the property of Mr. Hawk.

“ Now, gentlemen of the jury, let me draw your attention to this point. You see before you this Benjamin Brace, a seaman of worth and of reputation, the follower of Nelson, the mutilated of Trafalgar; you see him, one who fought side by side with the great hero of the ocean, and having served that great man in every capacity in which seaman could serve him, and having been wounded in the most glorious action on record, is now an inmate of that noble establishment, Greenwich. So far for his public character; his private life is equally deserving of your notice. In his early life he was distinguished by Nelson, and although frequently offered promotion as the reward of his services, he as frequently refused

it, in order to be always about the man to whom he was so warmly attached, and with whom he entered the service. You see before you the rough and hardy son of the ocean, bold, daring, desperate; yet has his heart so much of that softness which has ever distinguished our seamen, that when the battle was won, he was ever foremost to assist his wounded adversary. Nay, gentlemen of the jury, you see before you the man tried to the utmost human nature could support, — who caught his ruined, his murdered sister in his arms, receiving her lifeless form in the arm just raised to shed her oppressor's blood, — you see that man, I say, not only using his utmost endeavours to save his life, but, when that hope was desperate, with ready hand proffering forgiveness, becoming the friend of his greatest, his cruelest enemy, and receiving the child from the father's hand as he was led to the scaffold, and becoming to that child a father, a protector, and a friend. See, gentlemen of the jury, the truth so often asserted, that the boldest men have the finest hearts; and in those

tears which now drop over his rugged and furrowed cheeks, the best proof of what I have advanced.

“Is it likely, gentlemen of the jury, that such a man would pawn his soul for a falsehood? Is it possible, I will ask, that such a man would stand before his God and swear to a base lie—and he has sworn, and would be ready again now to do so could his oath be received—that he never has allowed the eye of curiosity to pry into the secrets of the dead. Nay, with such scrupulous faith has he acted, that not even his legal adviser has been permitted to see the paper; and I, his counsel, to this moment am as ignorant as the child unborn whether the paper be opened or not. All I am informed of is this: that when he received this document, on which now rests his claim to that money which would support his wife in affluence, or beggar her to poverty, he carefully enveloped it in another cover; that on his way to Mr. Hawk, whither he went with all the unsuspecting frankness of a sailor, to cope with one cunning in the law, subtle in evasions, and whose greatest disgrace

is his having so sought to arrive at his end, he removed the envelope: he had, unguardedly, placed his seal over that of the deceased; in removing one, he tore away the other. I see my learned adversary smile; but he must be aware that, although the seal is removed, the letter may be unopened: and this will shortly be decided by his lordship.

“ It remains for me, gentlemen of the jury, having made you thus familiar with the case, only to call upon you to exercise your best judgment in this affair. It is a case where a counsel can be of little use, as the justice of the claim is founded upon a deed which will be opened in your presence. But surely, surely it would be hard to deprive this gallant veteran of his due, if, through such a circumstance as the one I have mentioned, he should have forfeited his claim. But I do not envy that man's conscience, who, seeing the short space of life in all probability allotted to that gallant man, could wrest from him that which it was clearly the intention of the testator should be a reward for his good faith, and enable him

to pass his few days to come in comfort and in affluence."

After this long-winded yarn, I jumped up and took the gentleman by the hand, and said, "Thank you, sir, for your good opinion of me; although you have mentioned one or two things I had rather never had been said; and confound me if I can make out how you know so much about me! Were you ever in the fore-top of the *Agamemnon*?"

"Never mind now, my fine fellow," said the lawyer: "keep yourself quiet."

"My lord," he continued, addressing the judge, "I propose in the first place to identify the plaintiff."

"We will save my learned brother the trouble," said little Snub-nose; "we are satisfied he is the man; but I presume it is your intention to produce the confession?"

"Certainly," said his lordship, "my learned brother," (addressing my lawyer,) "is bound to prove that the plaintiff has a claim to the estate, or his case falls to the ground."

"Very well, my lord," said my man; "then,

with your lordship's permission, I will first put in the will; and as my learned brother has a copy, of course he will save us the trouble also of producing any witnesses as to that document."

"In regard to the *will*, certainly. Perhaps, my lord, the clerk of the court had better read it to the gentlemen of the jury?"

"If you please, my learned brother."

A paper was then handed to a young man who sat before the judge, right under his feet; and as he read, little Snub-nose kept looking towards the jury, and moving his finger about as if to draw their attention to the strongest points against me; and when this passage was read, "But if it appears that the seal has been removed, so as to allow the *possibility* of the document having been read by Benjamin Brace or others, then, and in that case, the entire sum aforesaid, that is to say," &c. And so it went on repeating and repeating, but twisted off at last to the old yarn, that the money and I were to part company. Well, as I was saying, when this was read, especially the word "*possibility*," Snub-nose pointed so well to the men

in the box, that I could understand his dumb show as well as if he had talked it all with his fingers; he twisted about like a cockchafer on a pin, and made more faces, and full as ugly as a clown at a play.

When the little clerk had done reading, my man said, "Now, Mr. Brace, produce the document;" and as I unbuttoned my coat to get at it, every blessed man and woman in the court leaned over to see it, and at that moment you might have heard a pin fall. Well, I took it out, and I unlaid the parcelling of my pocket-handkerchief: upon which little Snub-nose said, "Let me see it, sir, if you please; allow me to look at it." So I turns round, and says I, "If I do, I'll be d—d, old boy!"

"You had better hand it to his lordship," said my man.

"That's just the tack I'm going to sail upon. But," said I to his lordship, "my lord, as God is above, I have never read it: I promised Tackle no man should read it, and I trust your lordship will neither read it yourself, nor satisfy the curiosity of that little man in the wig, who

seems as ready to claw it as a Jamaica land-crab to taste a new-buried marine."

Well, at this there was a great laugh; but "Silence—silence in the court!" a fellow cried out, and soon put them all to rights. The clerk who read the will put out his paw for the paper; but, says I, "Avaust heaving there, shipmate! every man to his station, and the cook to the fore sheet. No man touches this but his lordship, and he won't read it either. There, my lord," said I, as I gave it to him, "you are the first man who has ever touched the outside of this paper; and if it was not for my wife and her daughter, neither you nor any man breathing should ever have seen it."

"There is some difficulty," said his lordship, "in this affair. Can we by any means identify the paper? who knows that this is the actual document?"

"Why, for the matter of that," said I, "I'll take my bible oath of it."

"I wish," said my opponent, "some one would keep that old fellow quiet. I can explain to your lordship, if my learned brother

will allow me, that we have the original seal in court, which it appears that Tapes affixed to the document himself; and, by a paper which is in the deceased's handwriting, we learn that he preserved this seal in order to prove the identity of the document."

"Give us your flipper," said I to my man; "we are all on the right tack, and we shall fetch to windward of the other old boy soon enough. Why, what a fool I was never to have thought of that before! What a treat of brandy and tobacco we'll have this blessed night!"

"Are you mad, Brace?" said Lord Hennington; "what the devil is the matter with you? Sit down directly, and be silent."

"Silence!" said his lordship: but I was standing close to his clerk, with my hand out.

"Ay," said I, "we'll soon silence him, and that chap Hawk too. You may clap a stopper on your jaw-tackle fall, and shove your tongue into the cable pier of your mouth. Let's have three cheers, Mr. Marshall." And I got hold of my hat; but I was lugged down on the seat, and brought to an anchor snug enough.

“Depend upon it,” said Lord Hennington to my man, “we are all right: this is the way sailors express themselves when they think talking quite useless about a certain point.”

“Then, my learned brother,” said the judge, “I will describe the seal, and you will see if it corresponds with yours.” At this moment you might have heard a pin fall in the court.

“Why,” said his lordship, looking through his spectacles, “it does look a queer concern: but I cannot mistake; it is two anchors across each other, with a cable round about them.”

“That ’s all wrong,” said the fat little fellow.

“It ’s all right enough, my lord,” said I; “that ’s *my* seal: I borrowed a button from off the purser’s coat when I stuck my own parcelling round it; if you take off the round-
ing, you ’ll soon see the cable.”

Upon which Lord Hennington, who knew the judge, said, “My lord, perhaps I can stand interpreter: he means to say that the seal you described was placed by him on his envelope, and that if your lordship removes that, you will see the original paper.”

“My eye!” said I, “if that’s not beating Tom Cox’s traverse to get to windward.”

His lordship then removed the outer covering, and held the indorse up to my adversary. The seal was almost broken off, only hanging by the end, and the description answered exactly: it was a pelican bird eating a snake. The paper was carried away with the seal, and the letter *might have* been opened. His lordship just lifting the cover, said “It is open.”

“Then, my lord, I apprehend,” said the little fellow, “that it is useless to detain your lordship any longer: my learned friend will of course consent to a nonsuit, as, from the terms in which the will is couched, there cannot remain a doubt.”

“You have lost it!” said Mr. Marshall to me.

“My good old fellow,” said my man, as he leaned over, “I fear you have lost your cause; we must give it up.”

“Not without another broadside,” said I. “What! strike my colours when the victory is mine?—no: I’m blessed if that’s like Nelson

anyhow, when you know you have the advantage, to give it up."

"Well, my learned brother," said the judge to my man, "are you contented to be nonsuited?"

"Nonsuited!" said I, jumping up; "why, my lord, I'm very well suited indeed. Before your lordship says a word about the money, take off that covering, and let's see that it's open."

"There is no occasion, my fine old fellow," said the little snub-nosed chap; "we are quite satisfied, nor do we wish to expose the secrets of the dead; I would not on any account give you such pain as I am sure it would occasion you, to hear the paper read, or even opened before the court: we are quite satisfied, I say, and do not wish to disturb your quiet of mind, which reflects honour upon you."

"I'm sure I'm much obliged to you, counsellor," said I; "and if I had not swallowed a top-chain when I was young, I should speak more smoothly: but I'll have it opened, so that we may know we are all clear and above-board. Then, if that broadside hulls us, why,

down comes the colours, and you may tow old Ben Brace into your own harbour."

Lord Hennington had been whispering to my lawyer, who now said, "My lord, I cannot hurt my client by having the paper opened; for it is his only chance, and therefore I must request your lordship so to do."

"His lordship," said the other lawyer, "has declared it open."

"It is very true," said my man, "his lordship has so *declared* it; but the gentlemen of the jury have not *seen* it."

"Then I shall open it," said the judge; "and, gentlemen of the jury, you will be pleased to observe that the '*SEAL is broken.*' I mention this, as the will has reference to it. And now, gentlemen of the jury——"

"We are quite satisfied, my lord," said the ringleader of that round robin.

"No doubt, gentlemen," said his lordship; "but this must be beyond a doubt." So saying, he opened the paper, and out fell an inclosure. His lordship took it up and proceeded: "Gentlemen, on this paper—the paper

which had the seal—there is not a word written ;” and he handed it to my opponent ; “ and here, on this inclosure, are two seals ;—one, the pelican with the snake, the same as that we have already referred to ; and the other, a helmet, with the initials R. C.”

“ It’s the chaplain’s,” said I, “ my lord ; it’s Mr. Carter’s ; for when the master-at-arms came to tell Tackle that his hour was come and the yard-rope manned, he sealed that paper, and borrowed the seal from the chaplain.”

“ Poh, poh ! my good fellow,” said little Snub-nose : “ it’s very strange you never thought of that before.”

“ My lord,” said my man, “ that is my case.”

The letter was handed round to the jury, and to my and the opposite lawyer. The seal was examined — nay, tried by Tapes’s seal ; and Hawk and the little lawyer chattered away like young rooks ; whilst Mr. Kite, making a bow to me and shaking me by the hand, walked out of the court.

“May it please your lordship — gentlemen of the jury,” began the little fat lawyer, “well might my learned opponent begin his opening speech by saying, that ‘in all his professional practice a harder task had never devolved upon him than the cause in which he is now engaged;’ and very certain am I, that, had he said ‘a more hopeless case,’ you, gentlemen of the jury, would have given him the credit due to his sincerity. There are cases so easily disposed of, and so certain in their results, that nothing has surprised me more than that the plaintiff should have had the audacity to bring the action at all, knowing that he must be defeated: but drowning men catch at straws, and I dare say, to use a phrase familiar to the plaintiff, he was told ‘that a chance shot might kill the devil.’ Those shots may succeed in a naval action; but in an action in the Common Pleas, where we are defended by the bulwark of honesty, those shots only hit which are directed by the coolness and clearsightedness of truth.

“Gentlemen of the jury, my learned brother

was pleased to enact the biographer in regard to his client ; and you may now judge how true is the saying of Coleridge, that ‘ literary executors make sad havock of the testator’s brains.’ You would suppose, from the statement made by my learned brother, that the plaintiff, although bold and resolute before the enemies of his country, was shy, stupid, wanting in common observance — a very infant in regard to transactions on shore,—and that he, poor, dear, little, tender-minded fellow ! went to Mr. Hawk’s house like a sheep to the slaughter, unconscious that his destruction was at hand. Gentlemen, at that interview, which my learned brother has designated as the greatest disgrace to my client, there were three gentlemen present besides the defendant, all men of high reputation and character ; and one, the partner of my client, when he heard the plaintiff say that the seal was removed, actually advised him not to show the letter, but to furnish himself with a legal adviser. Does this look like inveigling the ignorant seaman to a house in order to plunder him, when one of the

parties points out the danger of the navigation, and recommends the unskilful mariner to take a pilot? So far from this being the fact, the old weather-beaten seaman was received like a friend, counselled as a friend, dismissed as a friend. The only object the defendant had was, to avoid litigation, at once to relinquish the money had the seal been entire; and no man, I am sure, would more generously have made a sacrifice of that which is clearly his own, than my honest, upright, and generous client. What follows? The attorney for the plaintiff makes a *claim*. Gentlemen of the jury, remark that, — a *claim* upon the dividends, without once acting up to the terms of the will! And when, forsooth, he is refused this very unreasonnable demand, he brings this action, in order to frighten those into subjection whom he could not openly conquer. But we are not so easily conquered. It was nothing more than a straw thrown up to show the direction of the wind, and I am very much mistaken if the plaintiff does not find himself taken aback."

“Well, then,” said I, “old boy, I shall brace about, or pay round off on my heel.”

“No doubt,” he continued; “and I fancy that is his object; or, in other words, to tip his attorney leg-bail, and show him his heels as quickly as possible, paying him off by running off. Of course, gentlemen of the jury, the plaintiff’s character is the most material point on which my opponent rests his claim. As for the seals, they are of little importance — bread seals may be made so as to defy detection; and, for all we know, this precious document is nothing more than a blank sheet of paper on which the plaintiff has affixed two seals, whilst the original document, after having been read, may have been destroyed. But it is our intention to have that opened; for it so happens that we have in court several letters written by Tackle to which we can refer, and identify, not only the handwriting, but his very remarkable signature.

“Now, gentlemen of the jury, remark the character of the plaintiff, and do not be so won over by the Greenwich uniform, or the loss

of an eye or an arm, as to believe that because a man is a sailor he must necessarily be honest. The very man who is now the cause of this suit was a sailor, a murderer, a seducer, a smuggler, a convicted felon—a deserter to the enemy—a public spectacle of an ignominious death! Gentlemen, the plaintiff was his most intimate friend, his bosom companion; and if there is any truth in the saying, ‘Tell me your company, and I will tell you who you are,’ why, I think we might, without much risk of falling into error, fit the plaintiff with a character which he would not easily cast off; and I shall produce a witness who will prove the old saying—‘Birds of a feather flock together.’”

Well, when I heard this, I thought I should have gone mad. “D—— me!” said I out loud, “does this look like a bad character?” and I handed out my old leathern case, in which was every certificate I ever had.

“Silence, sir!” said the lawyer.

“Cast off the tow then, and make sail in the other tack,” said I. But I was soon brought

to an anchor ; although I did let out, that if I could get alongside of him, I'd beat his wig about his head as the after-guard do swabs to dry the decks.

“ Listen to me, sir,” said his lordship : “ if this interruption again takes place, I shall commit you for contempt of court.”

“ Then I am to hear myself called a liar, and a scoundrel, and a smuggler, my lord, when I have these certificates to show ?”

“ Sit down,” said Lord Hennington ; and he looked like the first-lieutenant when a man is brought aft for knocking down the master-at-arms.

“ Gentlemen of the jury, it is with no feelings of delight that I draw your attention to the plaintiff's character. As a seaman he may have been a good one—as a sailor, a brave one ; but there are one or two circumstances so at variance with the character he *gives himself*, that it is my duty to point them out to you. When we find a man with half-a-dozen aliases, we suspect, and justly, that something is wrong : a vessel, as the plaintiff knows, never sails under

false colours unless deception is intended ; and the pirate, before he throws out the black flag of plunder and of murder, approaches his victim bearing the ensign of a friendly nation.

“ Now, gentlemen of the jury, how comes Mr. Benjamin Brace to be William Fearnay on board the *Nancy* ? Can any man doubt the reason ? Why, of course he availed himself of the leave granted by Lord Nelson to turn his hand to an easy trade ; and I shall prove that he did so assist—nay, was concerned with Tackle in his illicit traffic. We find him sipping his grog, and smoking his pipe, hand and glove — with whom, gentlemen?—with the very man who gives him some cock-and-a-bull confession, by which he frightens Mr. Tapes into granting him fifty pounds a-year ! That Mr. Tapes was concerned with his brother, there is no doubt ; and I make no doubt either but that he was readily assisted by both the plaintiff and Tackle : else how comes he on board the *Nancy* ? To take a passage to Cawsand, you reply : most certainly,

gentlemen, I am of the same opinion ; to see his friend — but he intended to have a little profit for his trip.

“ Then, again, the murder scene, so admirably introduced by my learned friend, and so cautiously told,—why, it was the result of jealousy. Tackle found another man near the premises ; the girl rushes into his arms ; his blood, excited by this double treachery, overstepped the bounds of prudence, and in endeavouring to grapple with his rival, the pistol accidentally went off and killed the girl ; for if it were not accident, no one can imagine such uncommon generosity of mind in the plaintiff as to try to save his life, to attend him to the scaffold, and to wheedle him out of a confession purposely prepared to alarm Tapes. But even this part is not consistent with the character which my learned adversary has bestowed in such glowing terms upon the plaintiff ; for one cannot easily reconcile the brave, open-hearted, generous English seaman going to his victim and saying—‘ I have you in my power, and I shall bring you to jus-

tice unless you buy me off; only give me what I ask, and you may continue to doomsday, without interruption from me, to carry on your unlawful traffic. Pay me well to keep the secret, and I will be silent and discreet. You have your option: you are rich—remember your brother's death and infamy; come, pay me, and I am gagged at once.' Is this the open-heartedness confirmed by tears which course down a rugged cheek? But my learned brother was always fond of poetry and painting; his colours and his descriptions are vivid; but, like poets and painters, in aiming at too much effect, he spoils the fruits of his labour, and the skeleton is seen through the flimsy garb by which he has attempted to conceal its horror.

“ But now, gentlemen, I come to a more material part. I shall put a witness in the box, who will inform you that at the first intimation of Tapes's death, and the contents of his will, he went to Greenwich, found out the plaintiff, and related to him the terms of the will; he told him, if the letter was found open,

that his interest in the will would be forfeited ; and at that interview the plaintiff declared that the letter was unopened. He was cautioned not to open it,—nay, he was advised rather to stow it away in his securest hold ; and I mention this more particularly, because it was the defendant's own partner who gave this counsel. Well, gentlemen, what do we find ? We find the seal violently torn off ! We are told by my learned brother that this was incautiously done in an omnibus,—as if people selected the most public of all conveyances to take off the covers of letters, and to gratify curiosity at such a hazardous peril !

“ Why, gentlemen of the jury, you know human nature well,—and you will draw the same conclusion as I have done, —that the plaintiff long ago, never dreaming that Tapes would be so liberal, refreshed his own memory from the writing of Tackle, in order, should the paper have been lost, to have given such hints that the testator could not misunderstand, and thus threaten to whisper away a character until then unsuspected, and keep the sword which

would have cut him from society suspended by the slender hair of a seaman's secrecy. Thus holding Tapes in subjection, he counted upon the continuance of the fifty pounds a-year; never calculating that one day the treachery would detect itself, and pay the bitter price of its own base ingratitude; going on from day to day, as we all do, fancying death more distant the nearer we approach it, and believing it impossible that one who had lived so long in iniquity would do an honourable act at last. Tapes, true to his word, continued the yearly allowance, and, as a reward for this secrecy, left the possessor of the secret in affluence; but if he had himself learned the secret by breaking the seal — then he cut him off from that which would have left him beyond the wants of this world.

“Tapes is gone; he has left no kindred behind him; his sister-in-law has passed into another family, and none can say that in opening this paper we shall injure the character of the dead. Unless this is opened, we protest against any judgment against us, be-

cause, as far as the outward seal, the cause is clearly ours ; and, under any circumstances, it appears to me that judgment must be in our favour, for the word expressly is,— the ‘ *seal*.’ Now, had not the testator clearly intended this as a premium upon suppressed curiosity, he would have said, the ‘ *seals*,’ knowing there were three ; the envelope would have been mentioned : besides, the words would lead us to imagine that there never was a sealed inclosure ; or else how are we to reconcile this,— ‘ But if it appears *that the seal has been removed*, so as to allow the *possibility* of the document having been read,’ &c.

“ Now, gentlemen of the jury, it is my opinion, and his lordship will tell you it is his also, that the plaintiff has violated his engagement with Tapes. The *seal* has been removed ; the document has been read, and destroyed if there was an inclosure, and a false one has been substituted, with seals easily made, and preserved. Either the paper must be opened before us—and that is against the testator’s instructions, and will be done at the plaintiff’s hazard,

or you must find for the defendant from the words of the will."

Here he finished; and as there was a silence, I determined to shove my oar in; so says I, "I'm blessed if that fellow wouldn't make the captain of the hold believe that lime-juice and water was grog! But if ever I get alongside of him, I'll give him such a broadside, that I'm mistaken if I don't stave in his bread-room bulkhead, and let his provisions adrift amongst his ballast."

"Call Mr. Kite," said the little fellow; and another chap asked him some questions, which went to prove that he had told me the contents of the will, and all about the seal, and so on, and that I had said at the time that the paper was unopened. Then he went on about the advice he had given me, and mentioned my engaging an attorney in an action; which I never did, excepting when I knocked down Tom Gammon on board the Captain, whom we used to call, from his precious long-winded yarns, a sea-lawyer: and what that had to do with this business I could not make out.

Well, down gets Kite out of the main-top, where he had been hailing the deck and the judge for about five minutes, and my talking lawyer asked if t'other man was going to say any more ; when he waved his hand and said, " Wait a minute ; I 've another witness to clap in the box ;" and he says, " Call Mr. Hamilton."

Well, there was a bit of a bustle ; and a broad-shouldered old man, with his face as yellow and as wrinkled as a Malta orange in summer-time, gets up the Jacob-ladder into the top. He takes his davy to speak the truth, and he claps on a face as demure as a methodist parson when he is preaching a charity-sermon for himself. Who the devil can you be, thinks I, without you're Old Tapes's ghost ? So I gives my quid a turn, and begins to overhaul the stranger ; and although I have a good memory, and knew every ship I ever sailed n company with, from her figure-head and the line of her paint, yet I could not make out the stranger's number, and he was not down in my signal-book.

“What is your name?” said the little talking chap.

“Jacob Hamilton,” said he.

“Where are you residing at present?”

“At Calcutta-row, Blackwall.”

“What trade do you follow?”

“None at present. I was captain of a small West Indiaman.”

“How old are you, Mr. Hamilton?”

“Eighty-one, sir.”

“Well,” thinks I, “if he had come to volunteer for a ship on the peace establishment, the first-lieutenant couldn’t have asked him more impertinent questions.”

“Did you know one William Fearnay?”

“Right well, sir,” said he.

“How long ago was it since you met him?”

“In 1797.”

“Should you know him again?”

“Ay, if I were to live to one hundred and fifty I should never forget him.”

“It’s a long time back, Mr. Hamilton,” said the lawyer; “are you sure you could identify him?”

“Certainly ; that is the man ;” said he, and he pointed to me.

“Hulloa, shipmate !” said I, “what ’s in the wind now ?”

“I must beg your lordship to have that man turned out of court ; it is impossible to continue the examination under such incessant interruption,” said the little fellow.

“But I ’m blessed,” said I, “if I do turn out. That fellow ’s a pirate under false colours, and you want me out of sight in order to carry off the prize without interruption. I say, my lord, that old fellow’s sailing under false colours ; he has taken his davy to speak the truth, and he is working Tom Cox’s traverse with his memory——”

“Keep him quiet,” said his lordship to Lord Hennington : and I ’m blessed if even my own friend did not turn against me, and choked my luff with a threat of a gag.

“Under what circumstances did you know him ?” asked the lawyer.

“When he was a smuggler with Tackle on board the Nancy, in 1797.”

“ Did he belong to the Nancy ? ”

“ Yes ; he was one of her crew, and lent a hand to run the cargo on the night of the murder.”

Well, when I heard this I was regularly taken aback, and I got turning the hands up on board of myself to get the craft out of irons. I looked at him ; I traced the features of Jacobs ; I remembered the very rascal who wanted to cut my throat, and as I looked at him I stood upright like a man, and pointing with my finger aloft, I said, “ Jacobs, is that the truth, so help you God ? ”

The villain’s cheeks immediately got as white as a new Portuguese ensign—he faltered in his speech—a shivering came over him, and looking as if I had suddenly pierced him to the heart—he grasped the rail of the witness-box as if to steady himself ; then turning to Hawk, and pointing at him, he stammered out, “ You have done this ! ” and fell senseless. He was carried out of court.

A sudden alteration in opinion was visible on the countenances of the jury. My man re-

fused to talk any more ; the case was closed. The judge summed up ; the paper was opened before the court ; and there was not a moment's hesitation ;—verdict was given for the plaintiff, for I went by that name ; and Ben Brace, the last of the old Agamemnons, was made a gentleman of fortune, and could have walked into any store-house in the kingdom, whipped off the old uniform, and moored ship alongside of a lord.

“Honesty is the best policy after all,” said my lawyer.

“No doubt,” said I, “your honour has tried both ; and I'm glad you're getting in the right tack after all.”

He laughed—for he was a goodnatured chap, and used to such slaps ; he shook me by the hand, bowed to Lord Hennington, and walked over to talk and laugh with his opponent, who was concerned with him in the next case.

I was taken home in the carriage, and I made the coachman just as drunk as any piper on the road. The first thing I saw was Mr. Kite with my daughter's hand up to his lips,

clapping on kisses as thick as the first coat of paint on board a newly-launched ship. "Hulloa, shipmate!" said I, "it is fortunate I'm come to row guard, or you might have cut out that craft." Susan stepped up, and ran the yarn off the reel.

Kite had been there half an hour before me: he saw the case was sure, for he stopped to hear the beginning of the judge's palaver: he offered to make Susan's daughter an attorney; and she, after hearing the case, gave judgment in his favour; and that was to be a splice, and was one.—And now I have nearly got to the clinch, so I may as well bring up at once.

"If you want money," says I to Kite, "you shall have it; for I'm thinking you are too good a man to be an attorney. But listen," said I, as I clapped my hand upon his shoulder: "I have seen every kind of man, from an Indian to a judge, and I have walked in all four quarters of the globe; I have seen the man who had committed a kind of murder go into action as coolly as the best of us; I've seen villainy triced up to the

fore yard-arm, and yet walk to the fore-castle though the parson was reading the roving commission before the criminal — ay, I have felt the hand one moment, which the next would be lifeless ; — but this is what I have chiefly remarked : that reckless bravery is no proof of honesty — that for a man to do his duty in this life, he must feel that he has done it — that a tear in the eye is no sign of a weakness of heart ; and that to do good to your neighbour and act honestly to all men, gives more real contentment and happiness than all the riches of the world, or all the flattery of mankind. — Take my blessing, Kite ! make her a good husband, and she'll make you a happy man. Don't go beating about the bush as Hawk did, giving old Jacobs money to rob the honest and damn himself ; but stretch out your hand like a seaman to save a poor honest fellow from distress. The day will come when honesty will be rewarded, and when the launch of life will have no stoppings on the ways, but go clean off, as smoothly and as silently as a snow-fall on the sea.

“My blessings on you, Susan! God bless you! who have stood by me in fair and in foul weather—who have never let the misery of the moment give rise to the anger of words. Here am I, Ben Brace, nearly seventy-eight years of age. I hope I have done my duty like a seaman and a man in this world, and I thank God that I am able to declare, when I overhaul my log of life, that I can’t find out I ever dealt dishonestly with my friend or cruelly by my enemy. And now I can say, what Benbow said before me, and what every honest man would wish to say after me: ‘What little I have got, I have got *honestly*: it never cost a seaman a tear, or my country a farthing.’”

THE END.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.



